

JOE  
MONTANA  
Special Section

INSIDE

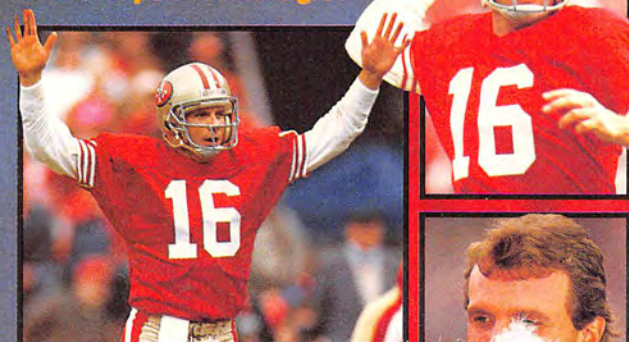
# SPORTS

SEPTEMBER 1991

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**T**HE SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS' **JOE Montana** is the greatest quarterback of all time. The 12-year veteran and can't-miss Hall-of-Famer has set records that most quarterbacks only dream about. For example, he's the only player who has been selected as the Super Bowl MVP three times, he's the National Football League's postseason leader with 34 touchdown passes, he set the single-season NFL record with a 112.4 quarterback rating, he has won the league's MVP award two times, and the list goes on and on.

Join writers Glenn Dickey and Ira Miller as they look at Montana's illustrious career in our special 28-page section. This retrospective includes a discussion of the rationale for drafting Montana in the third round



**MONTANA**

of the 1979 NFL draft; a look at the winning touchdown pass from Montana to **Dwight Clark** against the Dallas Cowboys in the 1980 NFC Championship Game, and how "The Catch" propelled Montana and the 49ers into the national spotlight; and an examination of the dominance he displayed against the Dolphins in Super Bowl XIX and the poise he exhibited in executing the touchdown drive against the Cincinnati Bengals in Super Bowl XXIII. You won't want to miss this special section that celebrates Super Joe Montana's greatness.

Sticking to the gridiron, it's time once again for our annual "Football Ratings & Inside Stuff" special section. On the NFL front, we'll tell you why the ball-control offense is becoming more popular than the run-and-shoot—and why it has become more effective. The hot topic around the league these days is expansion and the battle between cities to win the rights to become the home of the next NFL teams. The list of hopefuls includes St. Louis; Baltimore; Charlotte, N.C.; Jacksonville, Fla.; and Oakland. The choice of expansion



**JONES**



**CRAIG**

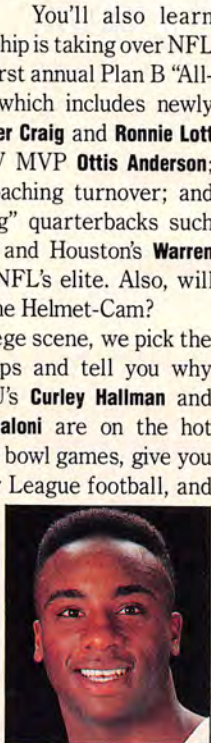
cities undoubtedly will affect the alignment of the divisions, and in this issue we show you the best solution for realignment and what new rivalries could evolve. You'll also learn how corporate ownership is taking over NFL teams; who's on our first annual Plan B "All-Unprotected team," which includes newly acquired Raiders **Roger Craig** and **Ronnie Lott** and Super Bowl XXV MVP **Ottis Anderson**; what's behind the coaching turnover; and why "thirtysomething" quarterbacks such as Buffalo's **Jim Kelly** and Houston's **Warren Moon** are among the NFL's elite. Also, will the NFL ever adopt the Helmet-Cam?

Turning to the college scene, we pick the season's best matchups and tell you why coaches such as LSU's **Curley Hallman** and Syracuse's **Paul Pasqualoni** are on the hot seat. We also rate the bowl games, give you six reasons to like Ivy League football, and tell you how players such as **Shawn Jones** of defending national co-champion Georgia Tech are making the ACC the top football conference in the country. It all begins on Page 68.

He was, without question, college's most explosive and exciting football player last season, so when **Raghib (Rocket) Ismail** snubbed the NFL for millions of Toronto Argonauts dollars, he shocked the football world. On Page 52, writer Steve Bisheff examines this extraordinary athlete and his reasons for heading to the SkyDome.

**Deion Sanders** has been called cocky, brash, arrogant, and rude, yet there is no denying his talent. In this month's "Inside Interview" writer Gary Pomerantz talks with Atlanta's two-sport star, and you won't want to miss "Prime Time" when he gets on a roll. The interview begins on Page 18.

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**ISMAIL**

*Michael K. Herbert*

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## HE'S NO DUMBBELL

### The Secret to My Success? It's in the Abs

NOLAN RYAN IS CLEARLY THE CLOSEST THING TO A supernatural resource the game of baseball can boast, and he believes weight training is a major factor in his unearthly longevity.

During the first four years of his career, with the Mets, Ryan's exercise program simply was running along the sidelines during batting practice. In the offseason he worked on his cattle ranch in Alvin, Texas, and played basketball occasionally. However, the Mets traded him to California after the 1971 season, and that's when Ryan became unreal.

Ryan now calls his trade to the Angels "the transitional point in my career." The Angels had a scaled-down, 12-station Universal gym in a tiny room at Anaheim Stadium, and Ryan began to experiment with weightlifting. When he embarked on his weight training program, Ryan worked out the first two days after pitching and rested on the third. After about a month, though, he noticed that while lifting had no real effect on his pitching ability, his arm had begun to bounce back more quickly from one start to the next. In 1974 Ryan added the stationary bike, which he rode for 30 minutes after lifting, to his routine.

When Ryan arrived in Houston in 1980, Astros conditioning coach Gene Coleman helped refine his weight training program. Coleman added the Jobe light dumbbell program, developed by Dr. Frank Jobe to strengthen the rotator cuff and shoulder capsule, to Ryan's workout. Coleman and Ryan also devised an abdominal program that Ryan believes is essential to any pitcher's workout routine. "You can generate power with your legs and apply it with your arms," he says, "but you need the abdominal strength to transfer the energy through your midsection without placing too much stress on your arm."

Upon signing with the Rangers after the 1988 season, Ryan was pleased to discover the workout routine he followed with the Astros was quite similar to that favored by Texas pitching coach Tom House. Ryan credits House with helping him balance his muscle strength. "You have to train both sides of the body the same," Ryan says. "It's important to remember that being a right-handed pitcher doesn't mean you can ignore your left side. You need that left side so as not to put undue stress on your stronger side while you're pitching."

Today, Ryan focuses on strength building exercises from October through January. In the offseason he maxes out, training to the point of muscle failure on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, while during the season he lifts only 70% of his maximum weight on the first and third days after pitching. Ryan divides his workout into cycles to keep from hitting a plateau. For instance, he may do three

sets of leg curls on the first training day, two sets during the next session, and five sets during the following workout. Ryan says the cyclical routine has ensured that his hamstrings, which have been

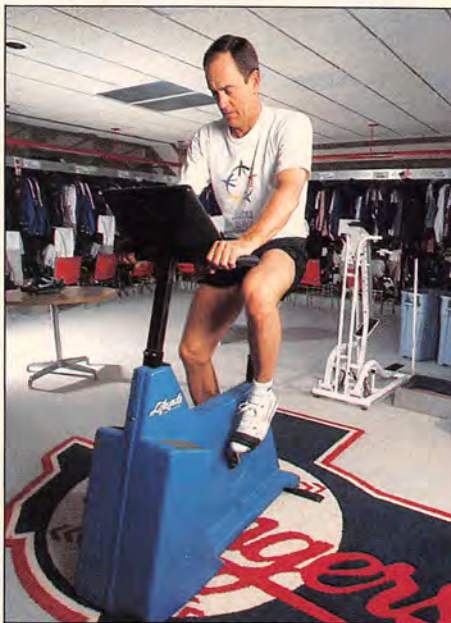
prone to injury in recent years, won't fatigue as quickly. On a pitching day, Ryan will do most of his lifting for one set with light weights, eliminating squats and bench presses. This, he says, "feels like a last-minute tune-up."

While Ryan admits he must work harder than his younger teammates to stay in condition, he insists he is in the best shape of his life. He has added 30 pounds of muscle to his frame since he began lifting and now tips the scale at a brawny 210. Ryan firmly believes he would have been out of baseball many years ago if he hadn't begun working with weights. "I'm very intense about my workout," he says. "You have to be at my age to stay competitive."

A positive attitude also helps. "You have to be confident enough to transfer an aggressive posture to the mound," Ryan says. "You have to block everything out and focus completely on retiring the hitter. I have a tunnel vision that I think is rare in most pitchers. When I'm out there, nothing exists but the catcher's target, the hitter, and my perfect delivery. In fact," Nolan drawls with a sly grin, "I'm getting to a point in my career where I really have good control over my fastball."

Now, there's a thought that carries some weight.

—STEPHANIE DIAZ



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## A HARDSHIP CASE

### The End of a Roman Holiday

HERE'S WHAT CLEVELAND CAVALIERS POWER FORWARD Danny Ferry misses most about his stint with *Il Messaggero* of the Italian League:

- 1. Friends.** "There were too many to name."
- 2. Maids Gabriela and Josepina.** "I especially miss having my underwear ironed—and their cooking. I can't cook."
- 3. The food.** "It wasn't just the pasta. I tried some other new things I had never been able to try before, like octopus."
- 4. His 13th-century villa.** "It was always clean because of the maids. I'm still learning to be self-sufficient."
- 5. Travel accommodations.** "Our owner had two corporate jets that we used to go to away games."

—JOE MENZER



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By BOB RUBIN

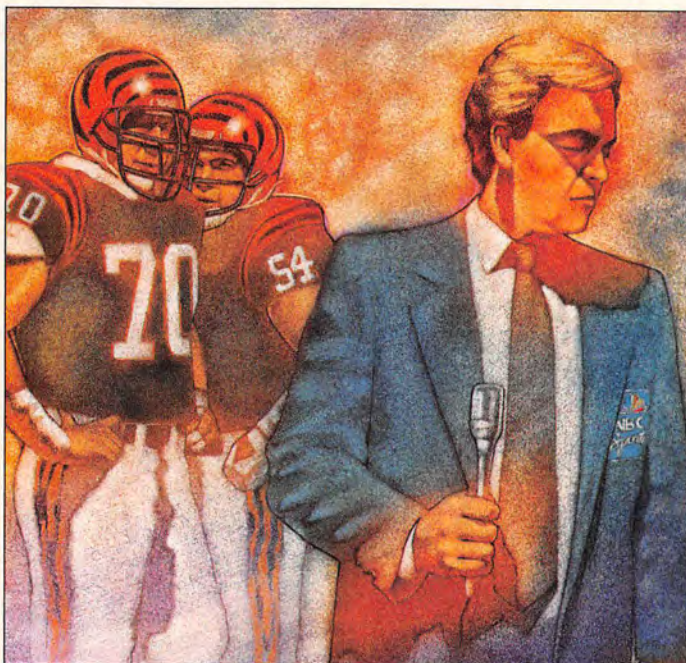
# Ex-Athletes Fight The Separation Blues

**T**HE PATH FROM THE football field to the broadcasting booth is well traveled, but the trip can be smooth or filled with potholes. The experience depends upon an individual's personality, his preparation during his playing career for a life after football, and the circumstances under which he left the game.

Some former players suffer withdrawal pangs. Some search for a high to equal the adrenaline rush of competition. Some mourn the loss of camaraderie, saying the process of estrangement begins almost immediately. A few feel little emotion; they walk away and hardly ever look back. However, all agree the transition is a watershed in their lives, when they leave the game to which they've been devoted since boyhood.

"It's like the greatest fraternity of all time, and suddenly you're no longer a member," says Joe Rose, who does sports radio and TV work in South Florida. His six-year career as a Dolphins tight end ended with his release in 1985. "That first year I didn't go to one game. I felt like such an outsider. I would wonder who was sitting in my seat on the plane, who was winning the card games. I felt empty, absolutely empty. I never realized the game had such a hold on me until it was gone. I miss it big-time."

"I remember when I was playing that my wife would tell me, 'There are other things in life. This is going to end.' I knew it, but it was still a shock when it happened—especially the way it happened. When you're released, you feel like you've been fired. You feel like a failure, like you let people down."



*When an ex-athlete returns to the locker room as a member of the media, he often finds that the guys he sweated and bled with for years now see him as one of the enemy.*

Joe Theismann's 12-year career as quarterback of the Redskins ended prematurely with that awful broken leg he suffered from a Lawrence Taylor hit during a Monday night game in '85. "Many make their own timetable for leaving the game, but I couldn't," says Theismann, now NFL analyst for ESPN. "I was prepared to play at least two more years, maybe more. That made leaving tougher. I really didn't believe it was over. My first contract with CBS had a clause letting me out if I signed with a team."

Theismann is still in withdrawal. "The adulation isn't there anymore. The edge is missing, and I had always lived on the edge. There's nothing in the world that compares to walking off the field in front of 103,000 spectators and 125 million more on TV, knowing you're the absolute best in the

world. Where can you find that high in the real world? It's indescribable.

"I'm into racing power boats now. When you turn on those engines and go 100 miles an hour over the water, it gives you a little of the same feeling."

Theismann hobbled into the Redskins locker room just two weeks after he suffered his grievous injury, only to discover he already felt like an outsider. "If you're on crutches, they look at you like you've got bubonic plague," he says. "My locker had Steve Bartkowski's name on it. I stared, remembering the way I'd always put my helmet on top and the way I'd keep everything messed up in an organized way, but there was nothing of me left there. Guys came by and said hello, but they didn't have time for me. They had meetings, practices, their routine to follow."

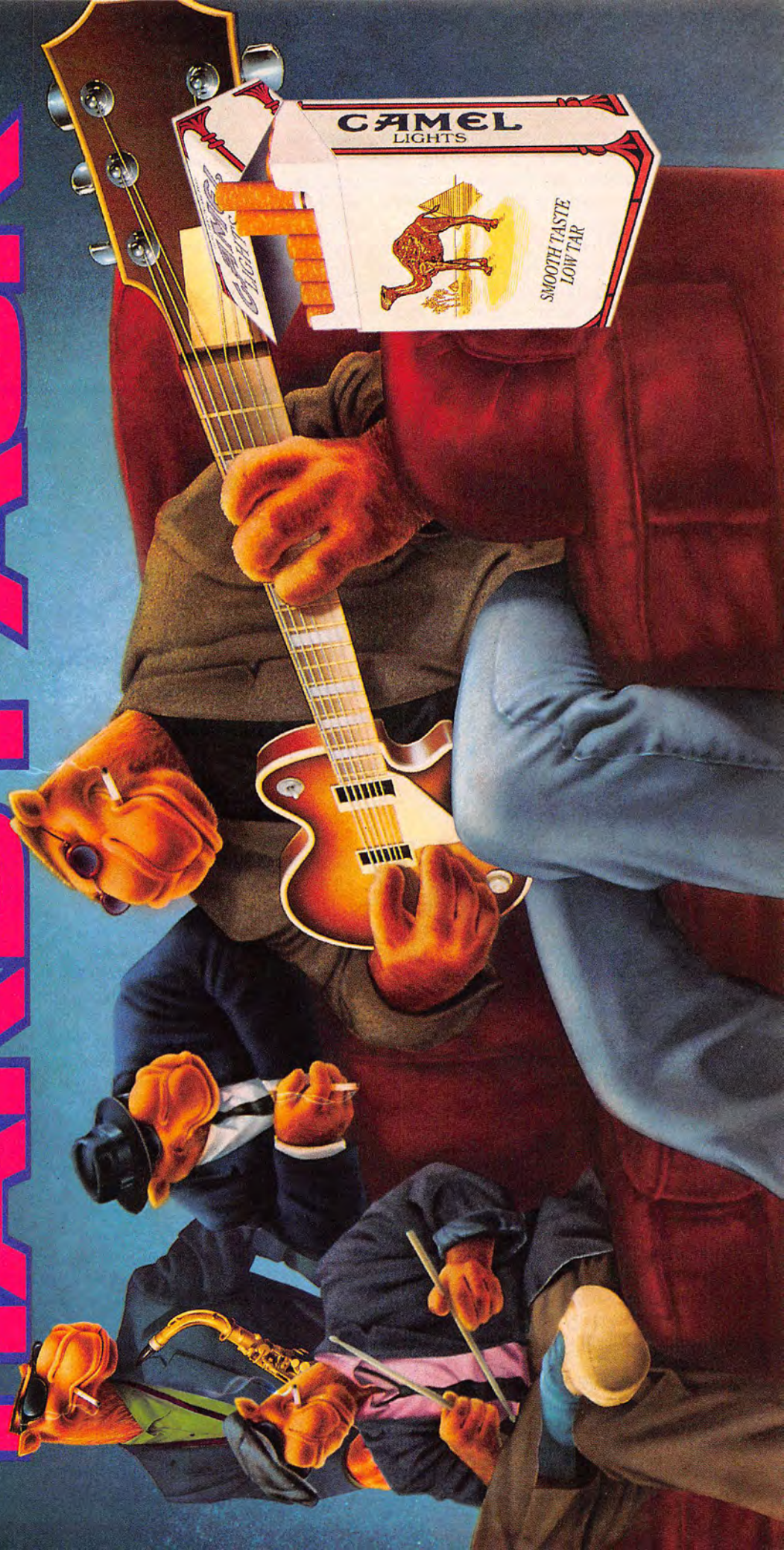
"I was no longer part of that world, and the finality of it was crushing. Still, I couldn't believe it. I instinctively followed my old routine. I remember punishing myself lifting weights and asking myself, 'Why are you doing this? You're in pain. There's no practice, no game to get ready for. Tomorrow's not coming.'"

Randy Cross is entering his third year with CBS after a 13-year career as 49ers center ended with his retirement in January 1989. He has a lulu of an analogy to describe how quickly the bond with teammates is snapped when a player becomes an ex-player. "It's like one of those old Marlin Perkins nature films where the lion chases the zebras," Cross says. "One zebra's a little slow and the lion gets him, but you notice that the other zebras don't slow up or look back."



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# THE HARD PACK





"Once you quit, you're like that slow zebra. Oh, you're still one of the guys, yet you're really not. They know you can appreciate what they're going through, but you've got a different job—you're the media. Ask them a question they'd rather not answer and you see a wariness, a sort of glazed look come over their faces."

Cross had planned his retirement and went out on a triumphant note, after the Niners' victory in Super Bowl XXIII. He suffered no immediate withdrawal symptoms; in fact, he found it a relief not to have to report to training camp. However, when he was on the field before the opening kickoff at the 49ers' first playoff game after the 1990 regular season, he got that old feeling.

"I felt pangs," he says. "That's the part I will always miss, the part that can't be replaced. I miss the big games, the competition."

NBC veteran analyst Bob Trumpy retired in 1977 after a 10-year career as a tight end with the Bengals. Though he was 33, was suffering a number of nagging injuries, and had promised his wife he'd quit, leaving football was still very difficult for him. "It was the first time since I was eight or nine that I wasn't a member of a team, that I had to rely on something other than my athletic ability," he says. "For the first time in my life, I had to be an adult. It was very, very scary."

For Trumpy, the feeling of not belonging was similar to what a player experiences when he's injured.

"There's an outer circle and an inner circle on every team, and the inner circle consists of the starters," he says. "If you're hurt and can't start, suddenly you're on the outside looking in. At meetings the coaches are talking to only 11 guys, and you're not one of them. It's a feeling of loneliness, of being cast aside."

"I remember I retired in February, then went back in August for an exhibition game. I walked into the locker room with a suit and tie on, and everyone made fun of me. I was a civilian. I was no longer in the inner circle, and I knew I never would be again." Nor would he ever find a replacement for what he calls "the adrenaline euphoria" of the games. "Having never taken drugs, I've found no substitute whatsoever—nothing close."

Ex-quarterback Archie Manning does analysis on radio broadcasts of Saints games, works preseason games on TV, and hosts a Monday night talk show, "The Second Guess." He saw many players leave the

game unhappy while he was still playing and was determined it would not happen to him.

"I saw guys who were bitter toward the coach, the owner, the organization—almost to the point of pulling against their old team," says Manning, whose 14-year career, mostly with the Saints, ended with his retirement in 1985. "They're jealous of the guys still playing. They're bad-mouthing the guy who took their position. They have a bad disposition toward football and life in general."

"I said to myself, 'Not me. When my time comes, I'm going to be ready.'"

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**'N**othing in the world compares to walking off the field in front of 103,000 spectators, knowing you're the absolute best in the world.' —Joe Theismann

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The time came in the Vikings training camp 10 days before the '85 season opener. A painful elbow injury was forcing him to miss practice and live on painkillers. "I left with no loss of sleep, no anxiety attacks, nothing," Manning says.

That night, he got calls from two New Orleans TV stations asking him if he wanted to work for them. He said no.

"I had a little radio show when I was playing," he says, "but I felt I'd need a clean break when I was through. I thought it would be hard, and that I'd need to get away." The stations persisted, though, so midway through his first season as a civilian Manning examined his feelings about being away from football. "I wasn't missing it, I wasn't looking back. I was content."

So he grabbed a mike.

Manning might have been talking about ex-Bengals wide receiver Cris Collinsworth when he talked about unhappy departures from the game. Collinsworth was released in 1988 after an eight-year career, and even though he suspected the end was coming and realized it wasn't an unreasonable move ("Watching myself on film, I saw a weak imitation of No. 80"), he was angry and hurt.

"For the first half of the following season I had trouble rooting for the Bengals to win, and though I hate to admit it, I'd hope the wide receivers would drop the ball," says Collinsworth, who now hosts a sports talk show in Cincinnati, works games as an analyst for NBC, and is a member of HBO's

"Inside the NFL" program. "I'd say to myself, 'Wait a minute. These guys are your friends.' But I had mixed feelings. I wanted to bring them down to my level. It was a constant battle inside. It didn't begin to ease until things started to happen for me elsewhere."

Once his pain faded, Collinsworth gained a new perspective on the privileged life he had led in the NFL. "It's a shame professional athletes don't have to deal with real life first. I mean like having a Joe Lunchbucket job and trying to make ends meet. That way they could really appreciate what a gift it is to play in the NFL, what a fairy-tale world it is."

Dave Jennings, an NFL punter for 14 years (1974 to '87) with the Giants and Jets, does Jets games on radio and WLAJ games on TV. He broke into broadcasting after his second season as a player because he didn't want to be one of those fish-out-of-water types when his career was over.

"I hoped to play 10 years, and anything over that was gravy," Jennings says. "After

seeing so many guys come and go, I was prepared mentally to deal with leaving football. I had no pangs at all."

Well, maybe a pang or two. "Last year I was interviewing Troy Taylor, a rookie quarterback," Jennings says. "When we were through he said, 'Thank you, Mr. Jennings.'" Ouch. "I said, 'Don't call me Mr. Jennings. It's Dave.'"

Terry Bradshaw, studio star of "The NFL Today" for CBS, had a Hall of Fame career at quarterback for the Pittsburgh Steelers that included four Super Bowl championships in 14 seasons, the last in '83. If anyone should miss football you'd think it would be Bradshaw, given the heights he achieved, but he doesn't.

"It was a business," Bradshaw says. "I was always uptight, there was always pressure, it was never a pleasure. Camaraderie was always based on winning. If you didn't win, guys didn't talk to each other. When I got out, it was a release. I'd had enough."

"All transitions are difficult at first. You never thought you'd get over it when you had to leave high school. Same for college. Then pro ball. But each time it faded away rapidly. You grow up, mature, move on. Sure, there are moments you cherish, but I just don't see any point in dwelling on the past." ■

*Contributing editor BOB RUBIN has made a fairly tranquil transition to the fourth estate from his glory days as an all-star tight end on his flag football team.*





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**I attended a race at Hiawatha Park last year in which there was a triple dead heat. Was that the first time it's happened in harness racing?**

**R. L., Toronto**

It's not that unusual. Indeed, a triple dead heat for win in harness racing had taken place 15 times before the race you saw.

**Who holds the record for most extra-inning home runs in a career?**

**A. N., New York**

Willie Mays had 22 extra-inning homers in his career. The active leader, Jack Clark, was second overall with 17 entering the 1991 season.

**Why do the Atlanta Braves wear the letters "JWM" on their uniform sleeves?**

**C. D., Williams, Ariz.**

The letters "JWM" are in memory of the late John Mullen, who was the Braves assistant general manager until his death before this season.

**What school and what conference had the most players drafted by the NFL this year? My brother says Notre Dame had more players and the Big Ten had the most of any conference. I say it was Miami and the Pac-10.**

**J. H., Mill Valley, Calif.**

You're both half-right. Miami had the most players drafted with 11, followed by Notre Dame with nine. However, the Big Ten led all conferences with 39, followed by the Pac-10 with 37.

**I saw a report on television about a speed skater from Mexico. Was this a joke, or is there really speed skating in Mexico?**

**T. W., Waukesha, Wis.**

There is, indeed, speed skating south of the border. The skater you saw the documen-

tary on was Jose Miguel Castañeda Palomera. He plans to represent Mexico in the 1992 Winter Olympics in Albertville, France. Castañeda, 28, trains in Austin, Texas.

"In Europe and Canada, where winter sports are common, people are very suppor-

were Spain's Seve Ballesteros and Antonio Garrido.

**In his seven no-hitters, how many batters has Nolan Ryan struck out? How many has he walked?**

**D. F., San Antonio**

Ryan, who pitched his seventh no-hitter on May 1, struck out 12, 17, 15, 9, 11, 14, and 16 batters, respectively, for a total of 94. He walked a total of 26.

**The Southeastern Conference now has 12 teams and has split into two six-team divisions. The league is planning a playoff for its football championship. Does any other major conference do that?**

**K. J., Oxford, Miss.**

No. The NCAA has a bylaw permitting a playoff for a Division II conference that has 12 members and wants to decide the conference football champion through an interdivisional matchup. Although it was not meant for Division I play, there is no provision in the bylaw excluding the bigger schools from a playoff.

**How many Super Bowl champions failed to make the playoffs the next year?**

**K. B., Ayer, Mass.**

It's happened to seven Super winners. The first were the Green Bay Packers, who didn't make the playoffs in 1968 after winning Super Bowl II in January of that year. The 1970 Kansas City Chiefs, the 1980 Pittsburgh Steelers, the 1981 Oakland Raiders, the 1982 San Francisco 49ers, the 1987 New York Giants, and the 1988 Los Angeles Raiders also missed the playoffs following Super Bowl championships. ■

*To uncover obscure sports facts, settle wagers, or unravel confusing trivia, send your questions to: Inside Out, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201.*



**In the SEC's divisional setup, Mississippi State and Florida won't run into each other as often.**

tive," he says. "I don't have to explain. In places like Texas, they don't take you seriously unless you play football or baseball."

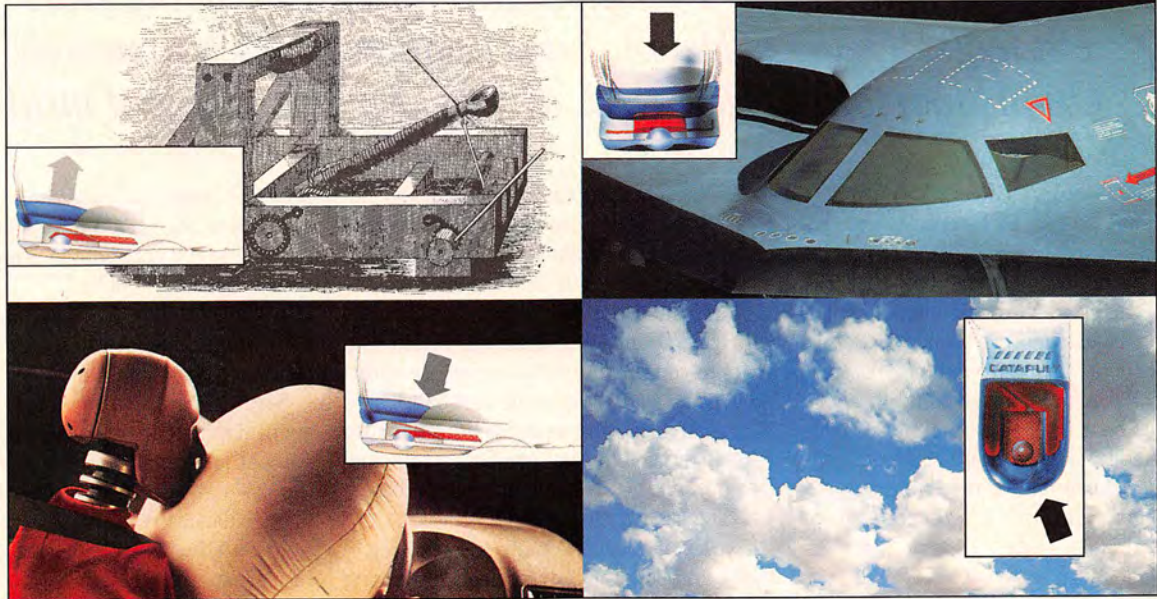
**When did European golfers become eligible for the Ryder Cup? Wasn't it just the U.S. against Great Britain for years?**

**S. F., Columbus, Ohio**

The Ryder Cup was contested between American golfers and British golfers from 1921 until 1973. With the United States dominating the competition, the British team was bolstered by the addition of Irish players. In 1979 the field was expanded to include Europeans against Americans. The first European golfers in the Ryder Cup



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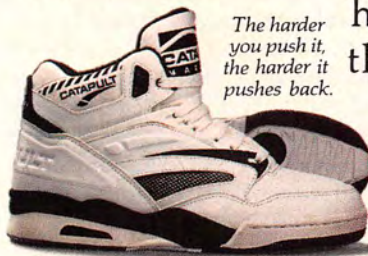
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► At its core is a working piece of machinery that cushions, stabilizes and propels. You have to wear it to appreciate the uncanny sensation of

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Catapult.

Maybe it's time  
they raised the basket.





By GARY POMERANTZ

# Deion Sanders

*On his marketing: 'I manipulated the hell out of the press'*  
*On idols: 'Deion is Deion. I don't compare myself to nobody'*  
*On his mortality: 'Hey, K.C. dropped Bo like a piece of meat'*

**D**EION SANDERS IS ALMOST ready to talk to INSIDE SPORTS. Almost, but not quite. First, he must put the cellular phone back in the bag that sits alongside his locker. At this moment, Sanders is bare-chested. A thick gold cross hangs from a chain around his neck. A glossy dollar sign is affixed to the baseball cap on his head. Say this for Deion (Prime Time) Sanders: He's got a little Reggie Jackson in him. Love him or hate him, but you cannot ignore him. He's a two-sport athlete who, at 24, is not quite the straw that stirs the drink so much as he is the caffeine in it.

Sanders is an Atlanta Falcons defensive back/kick returner of some renown who is trying to make it as a baseball player, too. But don't mention the B-word to "Neon Deion," for it was Bo Jackson, the most regal two-sport star, who once said of Sanders' big-talkin' ways: "I don't think it's good to sit up and brag all the time. The only people I know getting in high places by running their mouth are politicians." (Of course, Prime Time terms any kind of criticism "bojunk," though his terminology seems only coincidental.)

Deion is the first modern-day athlete to hit a major league home run and score a National Football League touchdown in the same week, but he has had his struggles in both sports. Sanders hit just .178 in two stints with the New York Yankees, who released him last September. He then signed a reported one-year, \$650,000 contract with the Atlanta Braves in January. Sanders' football contract mandates that he must leave the Braves on July 31 to report to the training camp of the Falcons; he is entering the third year of his four-year, \$4.4 million deal with the Falcons. He has proved to be an electrifying punt returner and a top-flight cover man for Jerry Glanville's men in black, but his tackling has been spotty.

"People say a guy can play two sports, but I say, 'How well?'" says New York Giants general manager George Young. "I mean, how can you split your dedication?"

Braves manager Bobby Cox says Sanders will have to make a decision within two years to concentrate full-time on one sport. "You can't wait forever in baseball," says Cox. And Cox, who sent Sanders down to AAA Richmond in May, predicts a full-time Deion might hit 15 homers, steal 50 bases, and hit .300 in a full baseball season.

Earlier this season, Andre Rison sat out in the Fulton County Stadium bleachers during several Braves games. Rison is the Falcons' All-Pro wideout, not to mention Sanders' best football friend. However, Rison, who wants Sanders to play only football, has an admission to make. "I always wish him well, but sometimes I want Deion to strike out," he says. "That way, there won't be any ifs, ands, or buts."

**INSIDE SPORTS:** You once said, "I'm not only an athlete, but an entertainer." Could you elaborate on that?

**DEION SANDERS:** I go beyond the call of being an ordinary football-baseball player. I try to give the fans that feel like they are on the field, like they are me. They are gonna catch a punt return or they are on base getting ready to steal, getting the chance to excel. The fans want something extra. The everyday athlete gets old. Anybody can be the everyday athlete. That's not me.

**IS:** How do you transfer that feeling?

**DS:** Some people have that . . . I call it "it." Like Andre Rison has that "it." Sometimes I watch a film and see myself high-stepping down the sidelines or getting excited when I steal a base, and I'm not even aware of that "it" until I see it the next day. It's just that "it." It's that aura in you.

Let me say it like this: I could stand right here and another big-time athlete who's

proved himself far more than I have could stand over there. You have a crowd of 100 people, and I'll get 51 of those people over to see me because I got "it."

**IS:** What other athletes have had that "it"?

**DS:** Muhammad Ali had that "it." Rickey Henderson has "it."

See, I get excited when I do my job. We get paid so much damn money we can get excited at least every once in a while. I don't think we should be criticized because we want to dance in the endzone or have a good time with the job, because I love my job.

**IS:** What are you trying to achieve by playing two sports?

**DS:** Success. I don't just want it to be "Deion Sanders plays football and baseball." I want it to be "Deion Sanders is good at football and at baseball." That's what I want to achieve. I feel like I can be as good as I want to be in football. Football is so natural. Baseball is a lot of hard work and really is a challenge for me.

**IS:** What aspect of baseball has been most difficult for you?

**DS:** Just learning to accept failure. Being a defensive back, we make one wrong move and it's six points. You break up 10 passes and get beat once, you've still been beat for six points. In baseball, I can fail seven times [out of 10] and still be a superstar. I'm not used to that. Terry Pendleton tells me, "D, you can't get a hit every time." I get upset when I know I'm right on a pitch and don't get a hit. I want to do well so bad that I can just taste it.

**IS:** What numbers in baseball would be successful?

**DS:** I could bat .100, but if I get on base twice a game . . . I go by my on-base percentage. I feel like that's my batting average because if I get on base, it's a double—and I might steal third. Most of the time I get on base, Otis Nixon and myself,







we score runs, so scoring runs is success—not what I'm hitting or how many runs I drive in. I'd rather be driven in. I'd rather set the table. I like to be the starter, the igniter, and then let Dave [Justice], Ronnie [Gant], or Terry drive me in.

**IS:** What did you learn from your brief experience with the Yankees?

**DS:** That was a damn nightmare. Wait a minute. *[Deion slips an M.C. Hammer disc into his CD player.]* This always puts me in a better mood to talk.

In New York, there was so much pressure put upon me to come in and do the job right away. I went in with that football mentality.

**IS:** What does that mean, "football mentality"?

**DS:** That means you are gonna do it and you're gonna do it now, instead of wait, learn, and be patient. That doesn't work.

**IS:** Was it even more difficult for you trying to do it in New York?

**DS:** Hell, yeah. You've got those butt-hounds after you every day. That's why I respect Don Mattingly so much. He's been successful year after year in New York. That's a hell of a thing. If you can be successful in New York, you can be successful anywhere.

**IS:** And you were playing center field in Yankee Stadium.

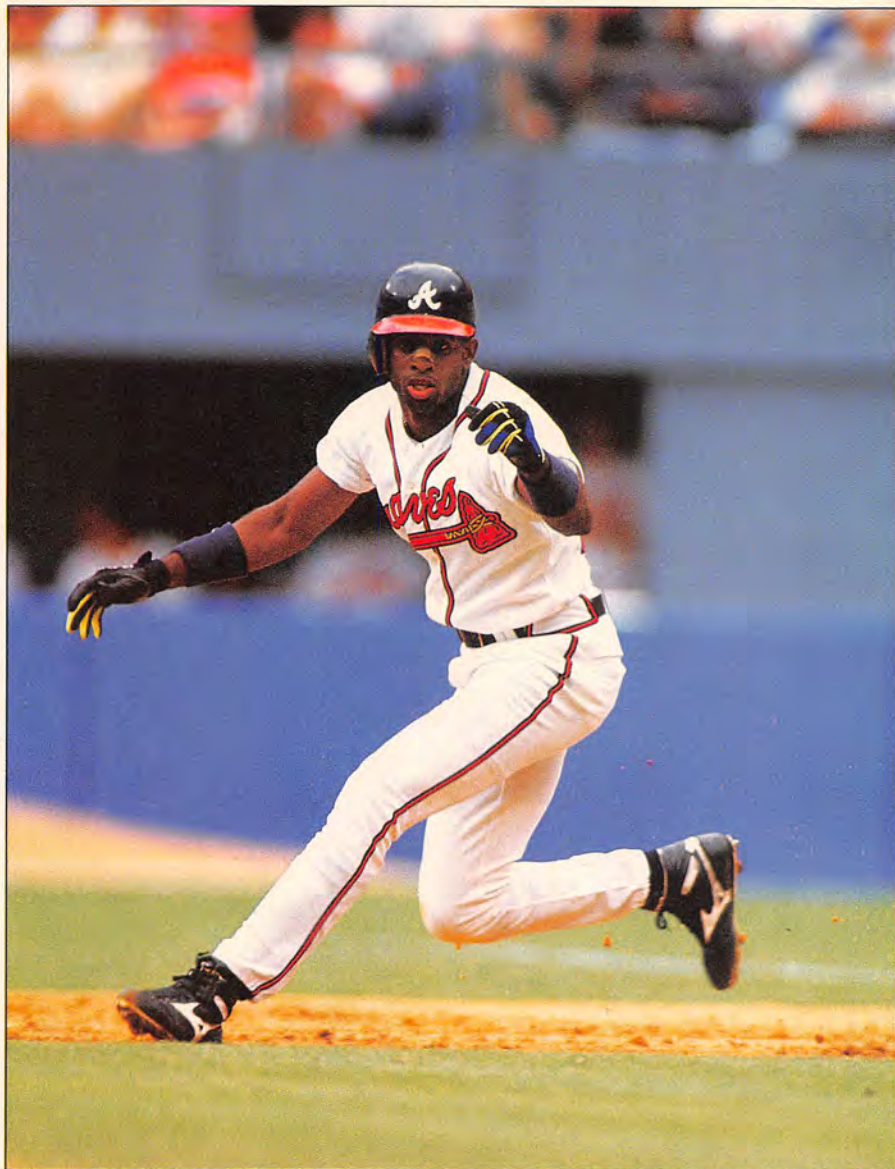
**DS:** That was a dream come true. Everyone wants to experience the Yankees, but I think it's hard for a young player to experience the Yankees when they are losing. Every time you do something you are gonna get criticized for it. You are supposed to come up and be the savior, and it just didn't work out.

But that taught me a lot about friends. When I was offered all that money [a multimillion dollar offer from Yankees owner George Steinbrenner that later was rescinded], a lot of people changed. A lot of my friends and my teammates changed. I was offered all this money, and they didn't appreciate it.

The thing I hate about the difference between both sports is baseball players will always say, 'You've only put in this much time' or 'This guy's young and he thinks he's this and that.' In football, you come on the field and you get respect. In baseball, Ken Griffey Jr.—he's produced, and older guys are saying, 'Oh, he's a hot dog. He hasn't put in no time.' Time, hell! When the guy plays, he does his job. That's what it's all about.

**IS:** How do you respond to the theory that by playing two sports, rather than focusing entirely on one, you're not as good as you could be in either sport?

**DS:** I don't feel like that's true because I've played both sports since I was six years old. I know how to turn the other sport off. My attorney was just telling me I have a photo shoot Wednesday and he wanted me to wear



**Success for Deion is getting on base: 'I'd rather set the table.'**

a football suit. I said: "Hell, no. I'm not gonna put on a football suit until it's football season." You gotta know when to separate the two.

**IS:** Why do you want to play both sports?

**DS:** Because I feel like I've been blessed with the ability to play both. And I'm not gonna cheat myself. When I will stop [playing one sport] is when I feel like I'm not helping the team. Then there would be no reason to play both.

**IS:** What was your reaction to Bo Jackson's career-threatening hip injury?

**DS:** I was sad for the guy. Considering some of the negative things he has said about me—things I don't want to get into—I still am very sympathetic for him. He's done a lot for the sports world, man. And I might be prejudiced for saying this, but he's another brother, another black athlete. Not enough black athletes make it in this world, and I just hate to see a great one like that go down.

**IS:** Does Jackson's injury make you pause to

think about your own two-sport vulnerability?

**DS:** The only thing that made me think was: "Prime Time, take care of your financial business. Make sure all of your accounts are in order. If you get hurt you want to be taken care of for the rest of your life. You want to be financially stable." That's the only thing it made me think of.

**IS:** So it made you think about your sports mortality?

**DS:** They dropped Bo like a piece of meat in Kansas City. It made me realize that, hey, you're getting paid well, but you are being used for your talents. When an organization feels like you can't do for them anymore, that's it.

**IS:** Why did you want to play for the Braves?

**DS:** Because the Braves are a young team on the rise. Young—that's the biggest reason. When you jump into an older team, I feel like there's a lot of animosity toward you.



Being a young guy with reporters around you and giving you a lot of exposure, it gives you a negative atmosphere.

**IS:** Is that what you sensed in New York with the Yankees?

**DS:** I sensed that very much in New York. But being here, where all the guys are young and coming together, we're close, real tight. Everybody here wants to see me succeed. I don't think there's nobody on this team who wants to see me fail.

**IS:** Andre Rison says he hollers to you from the bleachers when he attends Braves games.

**DS:** Yeah, I hear him. You know, all the people up there [with the Falcons] call me "Time" or "Prime." Here, they call me Deion or "D." If my phone rings and somebody says "Prime," then I know it's a football player.

**IS:** How does playing two sports in the same city affect you from a marketing standpoint?

**DS:** It's great. But the thing about me: I'll never be one of those guys who gets all the endorsements, because I'm a real person, man. I don't care how another person feels about me, because I'm gonna tell the truth. You will never see Deion Sanders endorsing Burger King when I know damn well that I go to McDonald's. I can't do that. I can't get myself to lie to the public. I can't say I like Bud Light, or whatever, knowing I never take alcohol in my life.

**IS:** You have said you were planning how to market yourself when you were in high school in Fort Myers, Fla., and at Florida State.

**DS:** And that's what I did. I marketed myself to \$2 million a year—because I was "Prime Time." I was something different in college. I was an entertainer instead of just a normal defensive back. That made me a lot of money coming right out of college, and a lot of exposure. The rest is up to me.

**IS:** Will you have to drop one sport at some point?

**DS:** People say that. If the front office puts pressure on you to do so, you would have to do it then, but in my mind, I don't want to. That's part of being unique. Playing two sports—people just don't do that. I wish I was 6'6"; then I'd play basketball, too.

**IS:** Do you feel you've been misunderstood? If so, why?

**DS:** Very much so, but I feel like it's starting to clear up a little bit. The whole scenario was: I was a little ahead of my time in college. I was 20 in age, 30 in my mind. I knew what I wanted to accomplish. I knew how much money I wanted to make. I knew how much money it was gonna take to take care of my family, and I had a plan to attain that. Therefore, I manipulated the hell out of the press to get my name out there and to get what I wanted. Once I'd done so, and

made my money, I didn't need them anymore.

Therefore, I didn't want to be bothered with them. They want to hear Deion say this and that, [but] I didn't want any of that bojunk. That's not me.

Therefore, once they sensed they were being used—and they *had* gotten used—they tried to get me back. They started writing negative stuff, writing stuff that wasn't even said. The power of the press is enormous, you know that. They were trying to get me back.

Now they think they've done their job, and I'm persevering. Now we're even. We'll call it a truce. Now I'm finally starting to get things credited to me.

**IS:** What is your public image?

**DS:** I really can't say because it's changed.

**IS:** From what to what?

**DS:** It's changing from a young guy who cares only about money and jewelry. You know, one thing that hurt me once was when somebody said, "The only things that Deion Sanders cares about are money, jewelry, women, and cars." I got my girl and my baby at the house, so how in the hell can you print something like that?

If you went to my hometown in Fort Myers, I could take you around in a car and point out the dope dealers to you. This guy, this guy. Neck full of jewelry. Nice car, nice

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car. Every time I go home, I take all of my jewelry because I wear it all. I want the kids to say, "There's Prime Time. That's positive. He's done good. He's successful."

**IS:** As a kid, who were your heroes?

**DS:** Muhammad Ali, Hank Aaron—The Hammer!—and O.J. Simpson. I've met Hank

**DS:** Jerry Glanville's a good guy. Reminds me a lot of myself.

**IS:** How so?

**DS:** Jerry Glanville don't give a damn about what nobody says about him.

**IS:** The Falcons spent their top draft pick in 1991 to select a cornerback and also ac-

**IS:** Are you aware that your Falcons buddy, Rison, says he roots for you to strike out when you play for the Braves?

**DS:** He don't want me to stay with baseball. But he says he wants to steal some bases. Andre says *he* wants to play baseball now. I got a batting cage in the yard, and all the

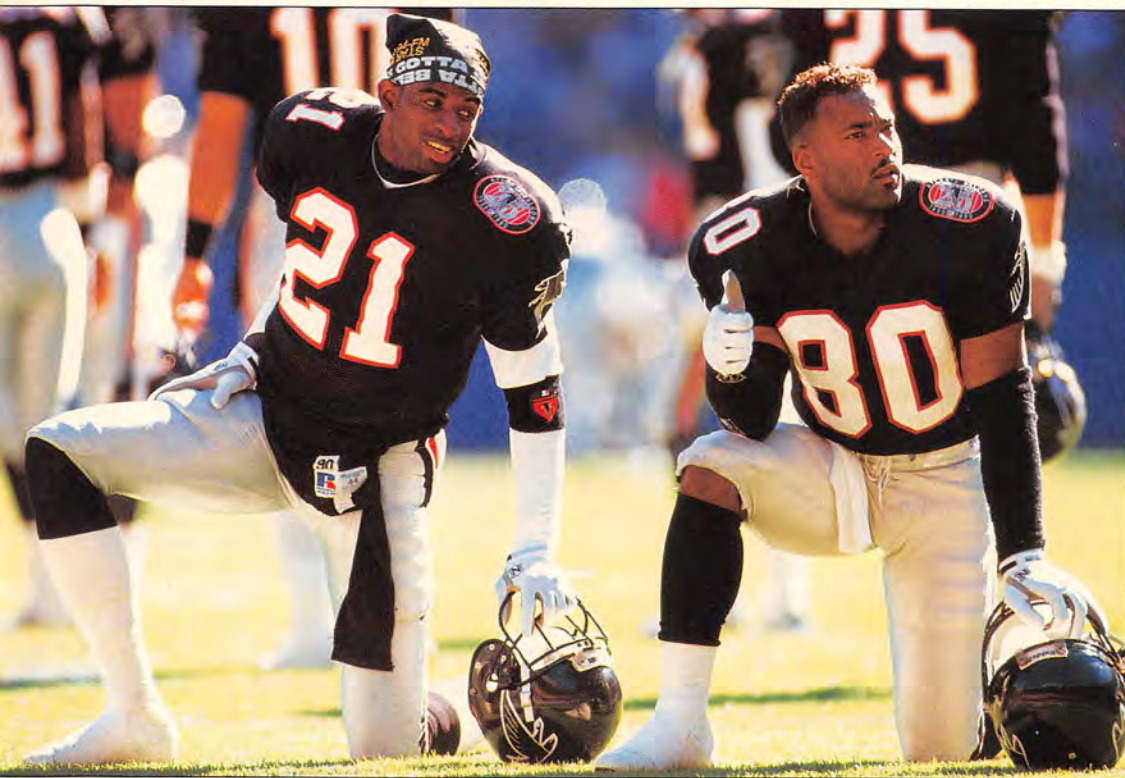
[Falcons] guys come over to hit. They say they are gonna play baseball. Big Jamie Dukes, Andre—lotta guys, man. You should see them hitting down in the cage.

**IS:** Were you concerned when the Braves signed Otis Nixon in April? He plays the game in a style similar to yours.

**DS:** I was happy as hell, man. Otis is helping me so much to learn the game. It's a dream come true. I hate sitting on the damn bench, but when the guys are doing their jobs I'm happy for them.

**IS:** How many bases could you steal in a year as a full-time player?

**DS:** Hopefully, as many as Otis. We've got this competition between ourselves. The loser will have to fully dress the other guy. Shoes, socks, underwear, everything. He's gonna have to dress me fully, up and down. He's one of my



**Sanders and 'Bad Moon' Rison: 'Andre's just like me, but a little wilder.'**

Aaron. I want to meet O.J. Simpson and Muhammad Ali.

**IS:** Do you pattern yourself after any football or baseball player?

**DS:** That's the thing about it: Rickey Henderson is my man. And Otis Nixon. Rickey has speed and a complete game. Otis is the kind of guy who is good but never got the opportunity. He's been hanging on. He's tough and he fights. Those are my guys.

But to actually pattern myself after another athlete, I feel like there's no other person in the world, a reporter or somebody else, who could say, "Deion is trying to be like that guy." Deion is Deion. And I don't compare myself to nobody.

**IS:** Do you dislike the Bo comparison?

**DS:** I hate it. I hate it because we're two separate athletes. He's a big guy. Compare Bo to [Jose] Canseco, or somebody like that. Compare me to a guy like Otis Nixon or to Vince Coleman. I'm a small guy, a guy with speed. Or to Rickey. Rickey is big, but he's our size. It's just like: compare me to Bo, compare Bo to me. Put Bo at the cornerback position, then you'll see what the hell he can do. That's the toughest job in the game.

**IS:** How do you like playing for Jerry Glanville?

quired veteran cornerback Tim McKyer during the offseason. As a cornerback, how do you react to that?

**DS:** I'm happy to have some players like that, [including] one that's already proved he can definitely do the job. But the Falcons had to do something. A lot of people say they done it because I was gonna get the hell out of there soon to play [only] baseball, but we only have one other cornerback signed, besides myself. Everybody else from last year is gone. They had to do something.

**IS:** Your contract calls for you to leave the Braves on July 31 to report to the Falcons. What if the Braves are in the pennant race on July 31 and you're a big contributor?

**DS:** If the Braves are in the pennant race and I'm playing well, getting on base, scoring runs, producing for the team, it's going to be very interesting. Very interesting.

**IS:** But doesn't the contract already say you must join the Falcons at that time?

**DS:** Yeah, the contract says that. The contract says Rickey Henderson's supposed to make \$3 million for the next two years, but I bet Rickey will make more money than that, right?

**IS:** Which is to say, contracts can be broken?

**DS:** Contracts can be broken.

best friends.

**IS:** Who are you closest with on the Falcons?

**DS:** Andre. He's like my little brother. Andre is just like me but a little more wild. Andre calls me a nerd because I don't drink, smoke, or stay out too late. I'm real, real mellow, man, away from my football job.

**IS:** You made a statement once after the Falcons had suffered a 45-3 loss to the 49ers in Candlestick Park in 1989. The fans booed you for stepping out of bounds on a kickoff return late in the game. Afterward you said: "They'll have to get up in the morning at 6 o'clock and go to work. I may get up and go to the bank and count my money. I don't care about those people." How do you view that remark, upon reflection?

**DS:** You know, people don't kick the ball off to me. They squib kick it. At that point the ball was sitting right there, and when I looked up about 10 damn guys were right there. And [the crowd] wanted me to go get killed. I took the ball and ran out of bounds, and they booed like hell.

I really meant that [statement], but it hurt me inside because to all of the people in Atlanta and to all of the other people around the country, I didn't mean that. That was one



of the biggest mistakes in my life, saying that. I went home later that year and my stepfather was getting up to go to work. He woke me, just moving things in the kitchen. It was about 6 o'clock, and I said to myself, "Damn!"

I didn't mean it to everyone else, just to those damn people [in Candlestick]. It's just like when fans cheer when a ball almost hits a guy. That pisses me off, makes me sick. I don't hate a man off the field; I hate some players I play against on the field, but I don't ever wish another man to get injured.

**IS:** You prayed for Bo after he suffered his hip injury?

**DS:** I prayed for Bo, and I pray for anybody I see getting hurt on the field. It really scares you sometimes. When I got that knee injury last year, that scared me. I played the whole year with my knee totally messed up. I had to get arthroscopic surgery when it was over. And I played the whole year. I never let nobody know how bad it was because I hate training rooms. You go in the training room once, you're gonna stay in there. I feel bad seeing athletes hurt. I look down the road. I look past football, past sports.

**IS:** What do you see?

cheerleading coaches. People in the community will help them do their homework.

**IS:** Where would you want to locate the Prime Time Center?

**DS:** In Atlanta. That's my dream, and that's gonna happen. I want to be able to walk in there and see a million kids having a good time. Black kids, white kids, Puerto Rican kids, Chinese kids—every color kid in the world having a good time. The big drug problem now is right there when the kids get out of school.

**IS:** Your daughter Deiondra was born in April 1990. How do you like fatherhood?

**DS:** I love fatherhood. It's changed me a lot. Deiondra is beautiful. I really wanted a kid. Baseball made me have a kid. I saw the older guys on the team in New York, and they had children run up to them when they come off the road or after the games, and I really got jealous of them. Now, I have to do some things different in my life because that's the way I want my daughter to see me.

**IS:** How so?

**DS:** I don't want my daughter to see this guy who people think is so arrogant and this-and-this. Even though I don't care, I think about my daughter. How would I feel? The

thing about me is people always have a pre-conceived notion about me. Then, after they meet me, it's different.

**IS:** Are you married to Carolyn Chambers, Deiondra's mother?

**DS:** I would never say.

**IS:** Why?

**DS:** Because they put how much money I make in the paper, they put everything I do in the paper. That's the only thing that's personal. To me, it shouldn't make a difference to other people. How should they view me different if I'm married or not? Because girls are gonna be girls. Women are still gonna come at me when I'm at the club or doing whatever.

**IS:** If you could turn the clock forward 30 years, what do you hope people then will say when they reflect back on your careers in baseball and football?

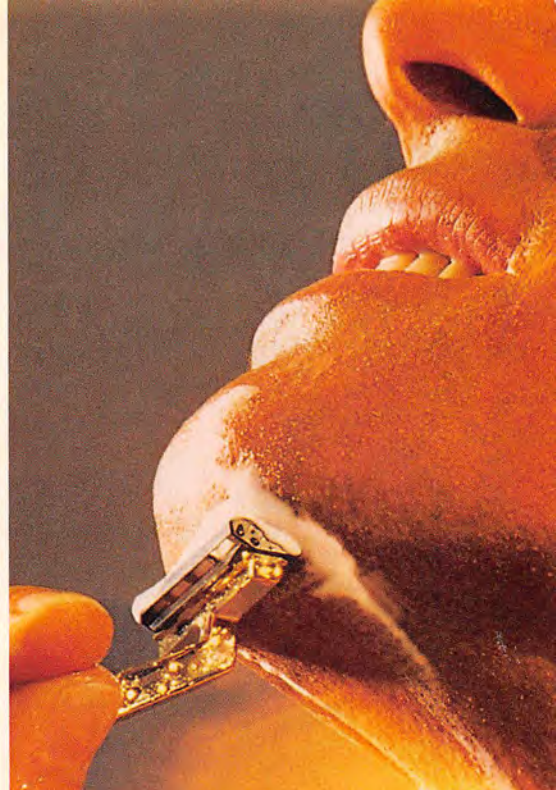
**DS:** "That, boy, he was like Muhammad Ali: 'A baaaaad maaaaaan!' This guy was not just a baseball player, a football player. He was an entertainer. He was something." ■

Atlanta-based writer GARY POMERANTZ got a good workout covering this energetic two-sport (for now) entertainer. This is Gary's first work for INSIDE SPORTS.



**In pro football the pressure is on on every play: 'I get excited when I do my job.'**

**DS:** I see a Prime Time Center for kids. We'll have black schoolbuses—I love black—going to pick children up from school, just like a regular schoolbus, to take them straight to the center. They'll do their homework. They'll have football, baseball, basketball facilities. The girls will have



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## JOE MONTANA SPECIAL SECTION

# The Best Who Ever Played The Game

By **GLENN DICKEY**, **IRA MILLER**,  
and **BARRY WILNER**



**T**HERE HAVE BEEN MANY OUTSTANDING quarterbacks in pro football history, but the quarterbacks who are most highly rated are those who won championships. That's why the names of Otto Graham, Johnny Unitas, Roger Staubach, and Terry Bradshaw usually come up in any discussion of the best of all time.

Joe Montana's name can be added to that list now, and perhaps at the top. Like Bradshaw, Montana has won four Super Bowls, and his performance is even more impressive than Terry's. The Steelers defense was actually the most important factor in the team's first two Super Bowl victories, with Bradshaw coming to the

front only for the last two. Montana was the key for the 49ers from the beginning, as reflected in his three Super Bowl MVP awards.

What makes Joe so good?

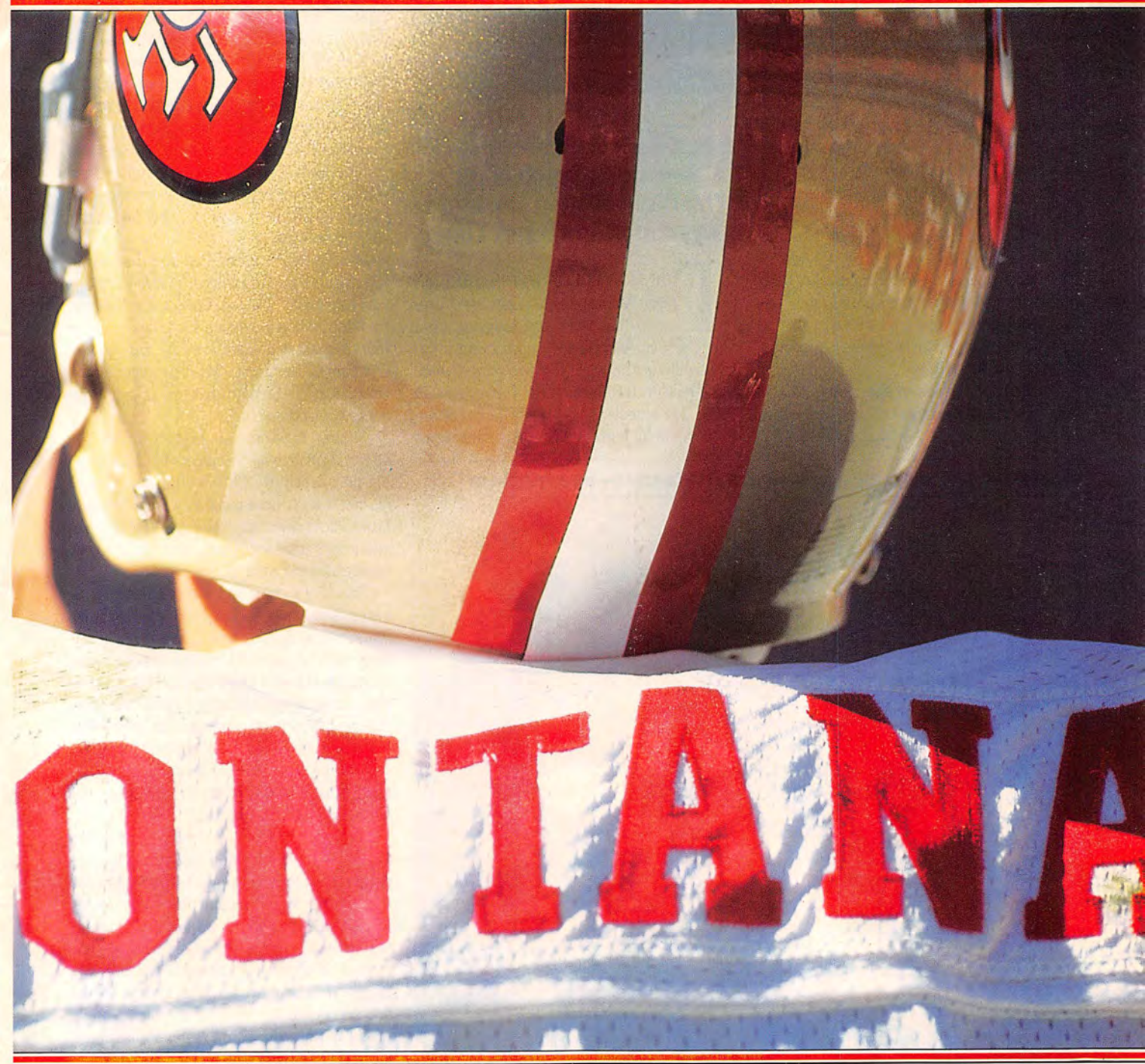
"He's a great athlete," says his former coach with the 49ers, Bill Walsh. "Some people overlook that part of it. He has great body control, beautifully coordinated movement and agility. Beyond that, he's courageous, instinctive, and resourceful. His quiet, reflective personality has sustained him for years. He's very coachable because of that personality."

Two other factors contribute to his success. The first is his mental approach.

"There are just some people who have an unbelievable edge, and most of that edge is mental, not physical," says Randy Cross, a former 49ers offensive lineman. "Joe has that same kind of edge. He has the ability to focus so sharply on what has to be done, and the ability to improvise. You can put a play up on the blackboard, but that isn't necessarily going to be the play he runs. He'll take it and improve on it."

"Everybody has complete faith in Joe. There's no way you can coach that. There are a lot of quarterbacks who look like they're going to be All-Pro, but they don't do it. Troy Aikman in Dallas has the ability, but he still has to prove he can play."





Cross notes that Montana has an "almost telepathic communication" with his linemen, receivers, and running backs. "When he has to move, they know where he's going to be." Former 49ers quarterback Guy Benjamin has noticed the same thing. "Joe has always had that extra sense, that extra feel, the ability to realize what his receivers will do if the play breaks down.

"I remember one time when I was playing," Benjamin says. "Mike Wilson had run a pass pattern, but I had to scramble because the blocking broke down. Mike stopped, and then he ran three or four more steps and was open. Even before he did that, I had thrown the ball, and it was right to him. When we

were watching the films the next week, [then-49ers quarterback coach] Sam Wyche stopped it and said, 'What the hell was that?' because he had seen that the ball had left my hand before Mike made his move. Somehow, Mike knew where to go and I knew where he was going.

"What I did once, Joe has done many, many times. That's what has made him great. He's had that sense, especially with Dwight Clark but also with other receivers.

"Joe can't throw the ball hard, and he's not a great runner. It's all inside. He has those intangibles. He has tremendous drive. He will not let another quarterback step on the field, and he'll play hurt. The great ones all

have that drive. It's almost fear. His whole identity is being Joe Montana. What would he do if he couldn't play?"

One last factor has helped make Montana a great quarterback: the offensive system installed by Walsh. "Joe was the right man in the right place," says Cross. "In another system, he might not have been so effective, but in this one he was a great quarterback."

"He's never had a great Pro Bowl," Benjamin says, "because it's somebody else's offense. This offense was just designed for him. He's made it really work, but he might not have been able to do the same with another offense."

Most teams look first for a strong arm and



a take-charge personality in a quarterback. Montana has neither. Had he gone to another team he might never have had the opportunity to show what he could do. Walsh, who had developed an offense that emphasized high-percentage passing with few interceptions, fine-tuned that offense with Montana at the helm.

"We took full advantage of his athletic ability and resourcefulness," says Walsh. "Everything was designed to use what he had. We kept building on that over the years. The pass receivers would adjust to Joe's movement. We just got more and more sophisticated and refined, and we were able to give Joe a great supporting cast, especially when we got Jerry Rice.

"Joe has been great for the 49ers," Walsh adds, "but the 49ers have also been great for Joe."

—GLENN DICKEY

**Fast fact:**  
82nd player  
taken in  
the 1979  
NFL draft.



## Timing Is Everything: The Right Man in the Right System at the Right Time

**T**HOUGH IT SOMETIMES SEEMS that Montana's career in San Francisco has been one long highlight film, there have been some important milestones along the way. The first came when the 49ers drafted him on the third round in 1979. The question was not whether Montana would be a great NFL quarterback but

whether he could even play in the league, and for most teams the answer was no.

"I think he was rated about 14th among the quarterbacks in the national scouting reports," says Walsh, who drafted Montana and won three Super Bowls because of it. The rap on Montana was both physical and mental. He lacked a strong arm, and he'd had some differences of opinion with Notre Dame coach Dan Devine, so he hadn't started every game.

Of course, Montana had also had some spectacular performances, particularly his now-legendary Cotton Bowl game against Houston, when he drove his team to three fourth-quarter touchdowns to win on the last play of the game. Most pro scouts and coaches disregarded that great performance. Walsh didn't.

Putting together his first draft for the 49ers, Walsh was intrigued by Montana's big-play capability. "My feeling was that, if he could do it occasionally, we could coach him to do it regularly," he says. "He had had some big games in college, so why not have a series of them with us?"

The 49ers, who had been 2-14 the previous season, needed help everywhere. Walsh wasn't certain that a starting quarterback was a primary need. "There were many people who liked Steve DeBerg, who was our quarterback at the time," he says. "Steve had a good arm, and he had some leadership qualities; he was a gritty guy. We couldn't be sure whether we were drafting a quarterback who would start for us or one who would be the back-up."

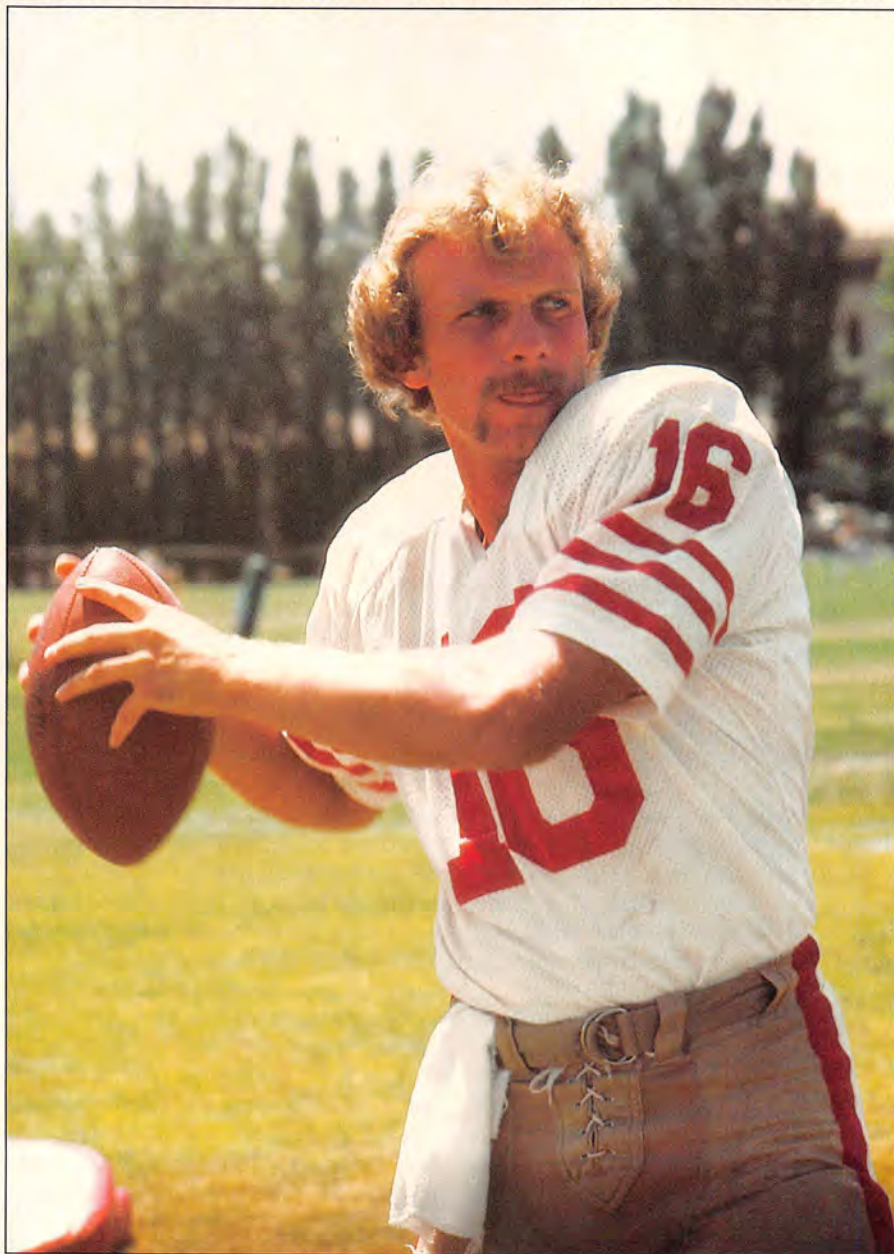
Still, Walsh, who has always been known for his ability to develop quarterbacks, was determined to draft a quarterback—but he didn't have a first-round pick. The 49ers, who would have had the very first pick because of their horrendous record, had traded it away for an over-the-hill O.J. Simpson. Their first pick would be in the second round.

Walsh knew he couldn't get Phil Simms, his first choice when he started his hunt for a quarterback, though he worked out Simms, among others. "I probably saw half a dozen quarterbacks," he recalls, "and Sam Wyche saw about 10. We had a hard time making contact with Joe, so he was the last one I saw before the draft. I got him to see me in Los Angeles, and I worked him out with James Owens.

"The minute I saw Joe move, there was no question in my mind that he was the best I'd seen. There were others in the organization who liked Joe, too—John McVay, Tony Razzano, John Ralston. I knew with the offense I planned to run Joe would be great. I knew there was a real future there."

The question: In what round should the 49ers draft Montana? Walsh liked Owens,

## Montana had the steely gaze—and a Fu Manchu—as a rookie in '79.





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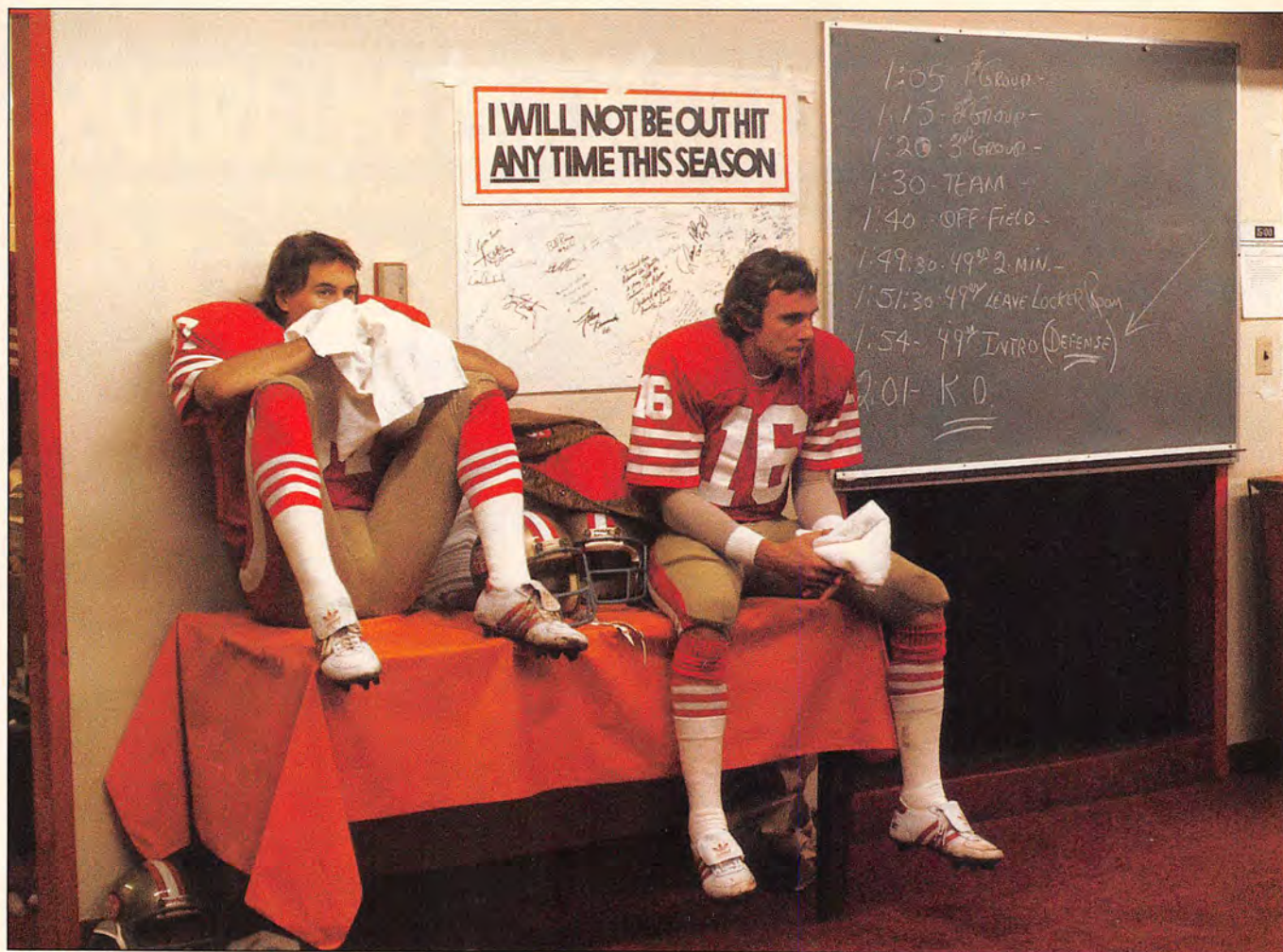
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**The hands and the arm: Clark and Montana, buddies on and off the field, led the 49ers to the big time.**

Montana's workout partner, because he felt that Owens, a college running back at 185 pounds, could be converted to a wide receiver and, with his speed (Owens was a world-class hurdler), become a dangerous deep threat for the 49ers. So, Walsh took Owens with his second-round pick, the first of the round.

Former 49ers quarterback John Brodie, who was very high on Montana, called Walsh to ask why he hadn't taken Montana. "We'd talked with clubs around the league," Walsh says, "and we didn't think anybody was going to take Joe before about the sixth round." Since then, Bart Starr, then the coach of the Green Bay Packers, has said he would have taken Montana on the fourth round. "I believe Bart because he's an honorable man," Walsh says, "but there are the Gil Brandts of the world who say now that they were pleading with their teams to take Joe on the first round."

Drafting Montana was the important first step, but he still had to be developed into a great quarterback. Walsh supplied the system, and he also nurtured Montana. In Joe's first season, when he knew only a few plays, Walsh would put him into the game in situations where he could look good, such as

when the 49ers had the ball inside the other team's 10. After Montana's second season, Walsh traded DeBerg. "Steve was a very tenacious competitor," Walsh says. "I knew that as long as he was there Joe would have a hard time taking control of the team."

So, DeBerg was traded, and a star was born. —G.D.



### How To Go Up For the Ball and Come Down In the History Books

**I**N MONTANA'S THIRD SEASON the 49ers shocked the football world, and probably themselves as well, by going 13-3, the best record in the NFL. However, it wasn't until the 49ers beat the Dallas Cowboys in the NFC Championship Game—completing an 89-yard drive and scoring the winning touchdown on a last-

second pass from Montana to Dwight Clark—that the 49ers and Montana were really taken seriously. "That was an indication of things to come," says Benjamin, the team's backup quarterback as well as a good friend of Montana's. "It was the first time that people really took notice of how he could take a team from behind. He's done that so many times since, but that game gave him confidence, and it gave the team confidence in him."

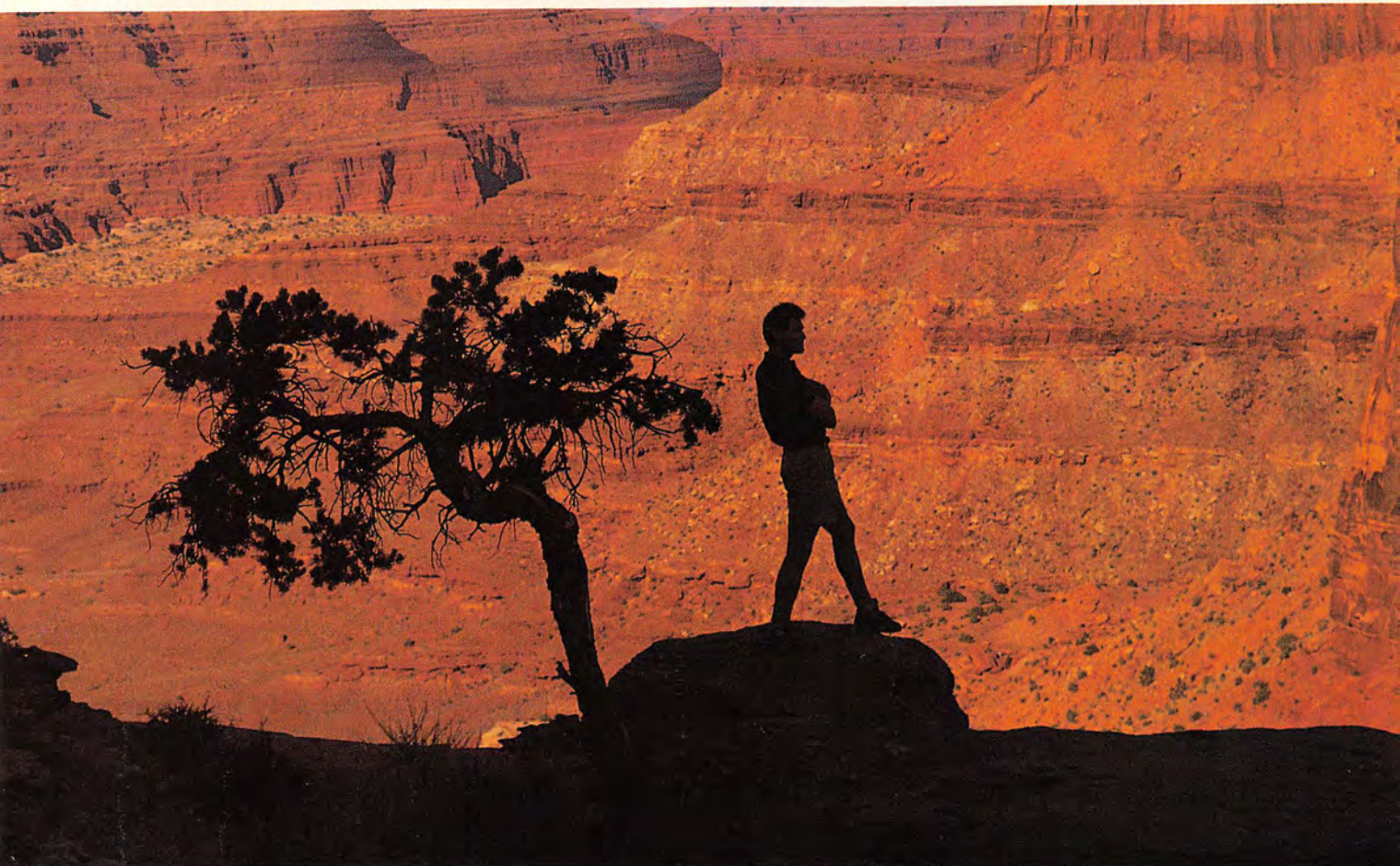
"The Dallas game was a huge game for Joe," says Cross, now an analyst for CBS on NFL games. "He had talked so much about beating the Cowboys because they had said, yeah, the 49ers had a good season, but we're the Dallas Cowboys. Ed (Too Tall) Jones had said he didn't have any respect for the 49ers."

"Joe was extremely pumped up. He has never been a rah-rah guy, but there's a fiery side to him, which showed in this game. Early in the game he hit Dwight for a touchdown, and he went looking for Too Tall. He got right in his face and said, 'Respect that! Respect that!' We're all looking at each other and thinking, 'Is this the quiet guy we know?'"

The 49ers outplayed the Cowboys for



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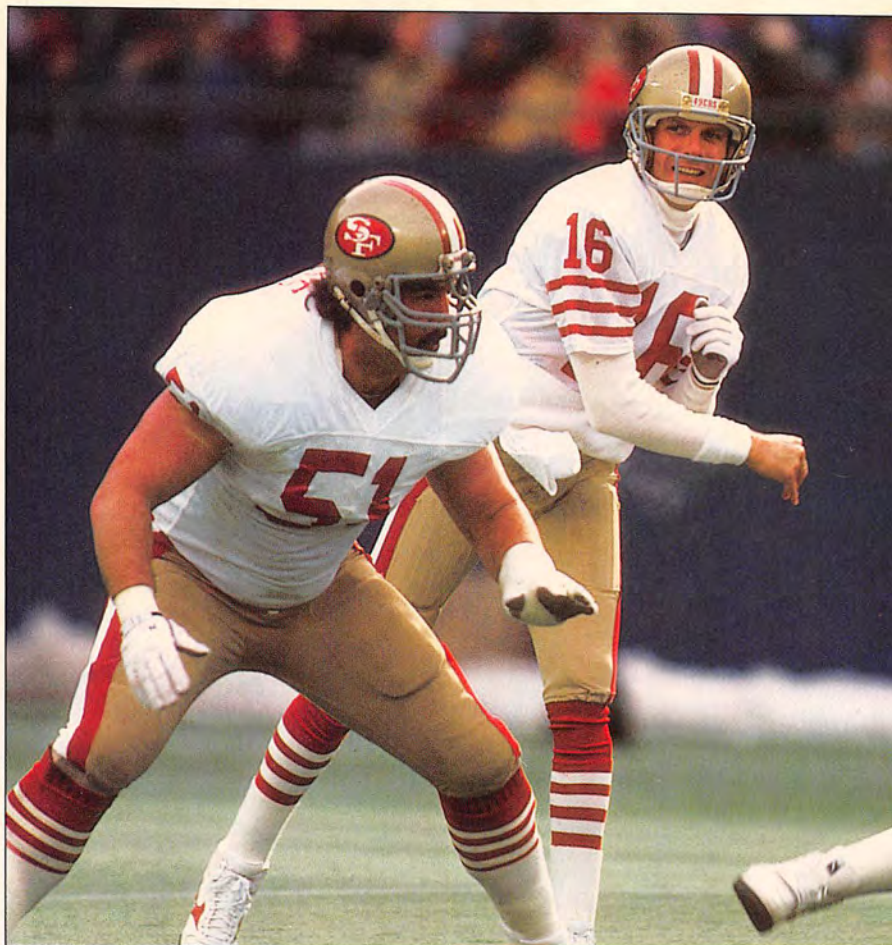
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most of that game, outgaining them 393 yards to 250, but some questionable officiating calls kept Dallas in the game. With less than five minutes remaining, the 49ers trailed 27-21 and were back on their own 11.

Nobody realized it, but the Montana magic was about to kick in.

"Joe is so incredibly focused," says Benjamin. "In that situation, the quarterback has to calm himself. He may be fired up, but he can't let that emotion dominate him."

"In a critical moment like that Joe is so into the game he's almost in a heightened state of consciousness. Fans are much more nervous in that situation. People think of Joe and they say, 'Boy, is he cool,' but it's more than that. He's almost oblivious to everything else that's going on."

Cross says the team had great confidence in Montana at that point. "We knew what he had done with that game in the Cotton Bowl, and the year before he'd brought us back against New Orleans [from a 35-3 halftime deficit to a 38-35 overtime victory] in a game that is still considered the best comeback in NFL history." Montana knew it, too. "It was a very confident feeling in the huddle," he said after that game. "We had to move the ball, and we knew we could."

---

**Cross protected Montana for 10 years and three Super Bowls.**

---

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What is mostly forgotten about that drive is that almost half of it came on runs—38 of the first 76 yards, in fact—bringing the 49ers to the Dallas 13. After a first-down pass failed, another sweep got the 49ers six yards. “Joe was just as excited in the huddle about stomping the Cowboys with our running game,” Cross recalls. “He’s always been that way. He’s not a guy who’s unhappy if he’s not passing the ball all the time, or if he’s having a bad day in the statistics. He’s into winning, and he doesn’t care how it’s done.”

However, with third-and-four from the Dallas 7, it was time to throw. “The play was a combination of Joe’s great instincts and poise, and one in which we had practiced what to do if it broke down,” says Walsh. “Thank goodness that Joe’s instincts took over.”

Montana was supposed to hit Fred Solomon cutting into the middle of the field. However, Solomon was double-teamed. He looked for his alternate receiver, Clark, but Too Tall Jones had his hands up and Montana didn’t think he could throw over the 6’9” defensive end. He brought the ball down and took a couple of quick steps to the right. In retrospect, that probably made the play.

“Football players are so programmed,” says Benjamin. “Almost instinctively, you react to what’s happening. When something unexpected like that happens it throws the defense off momentarily.”

Montana lofted the ball to Clark, giving Dwight a chance to catch it by jumping over Dallas cornerback Everson Walls, who was about six inches shorter. “Everybody forgets that Joe and Dwight used to play basketball all the time, and they were good basketball players,” says Cross. Clark jumped and made the touchdown catch that has ever since been known in San Francisco as “The Catch.”

“After the game,” Walsh says, “Paul Brown said Joe was throwing the ball away. Paul didn’t remind himself that that was the way we taught that play when I coached for him.” —G.D.

**Fast fact:  
Can dunk a  
basketball  
two-handed  
backward.**



### **Warning to the NFL: The Montana Machine Is Now Operating at Full Speed**

**T**HE 49ERS—AND MONTANA’S—first Super Bowl was played in Pontiac, Mich., the first time the Super Bowl had been played in a cold-

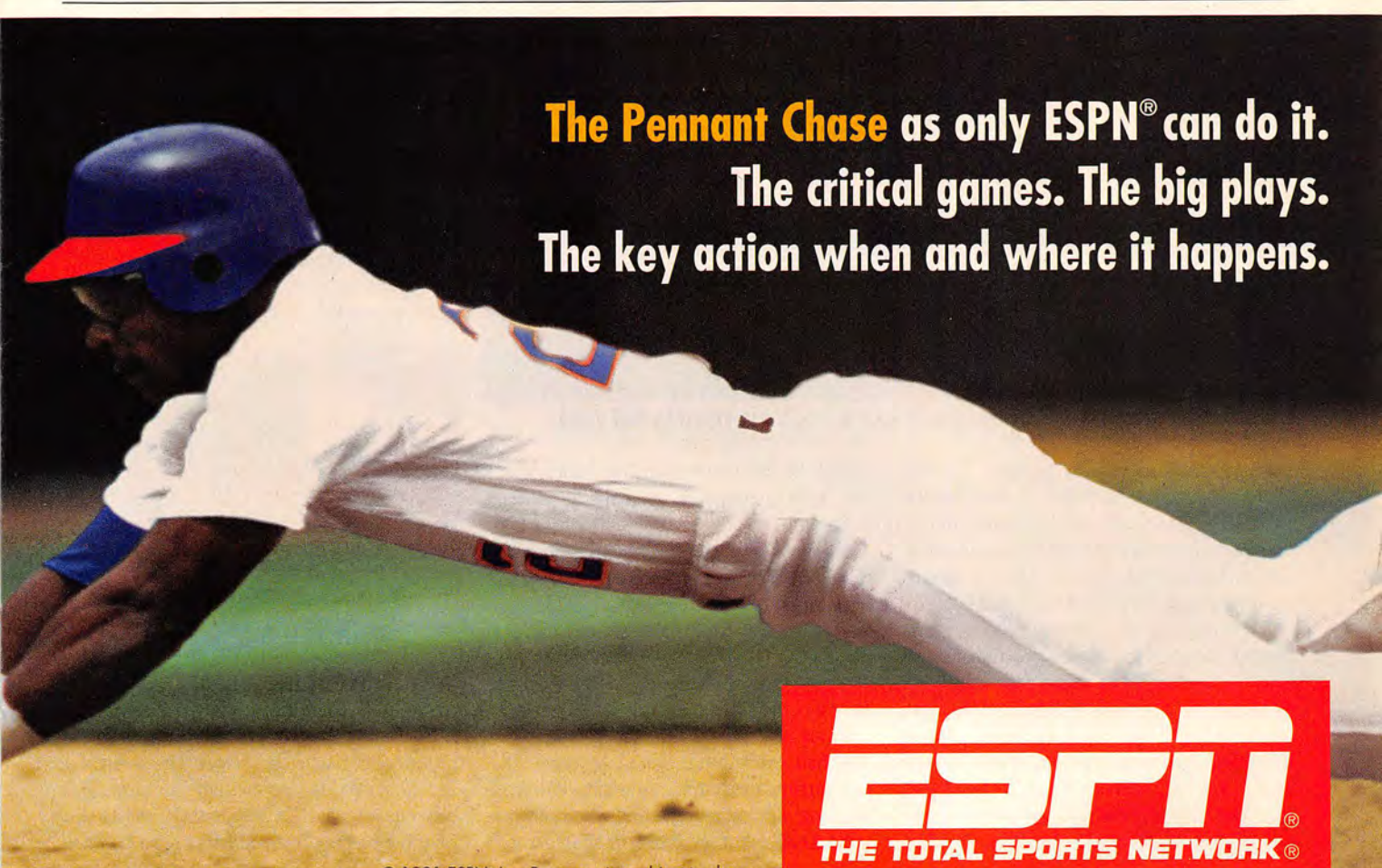
weather city. That probably was an advantage for the 49ers. “There wasn’t the carnival atmosphere we had when the game was at Stanford the next time we played in it,” remembers Benjamin. “This time we couldn’t go outside because of the snow and cold, and we couldn’t drive very far because it was icy.”

“I remember Joe was more nervous than I’d ever seen him. He was fidgety all week. He really paid attention and spent a lot of time with the game plan. He wanted to have total command of it.”

Some of the 49ers thought they would never even get to the game. One of the two buses carrying players and coaches, including Montana, was stalled in a massive traffic jam caused by the motorcade of then-Vice President George Bush. Walsh admitted later that he feared they might have to walk the final mile to the stadium, but the traffic jam finally eased and they were able to drive in, a scant 45 minutes before game time.

In the dressing room, Montana suggested they play a Kenny Loggins record, “This Is It.” The record was played over and over. “The song has a message,” says Cross. “You have a once-in-a-lifetime chance, and as the song says, ‘This is your miracle.’ You have to grab it.”

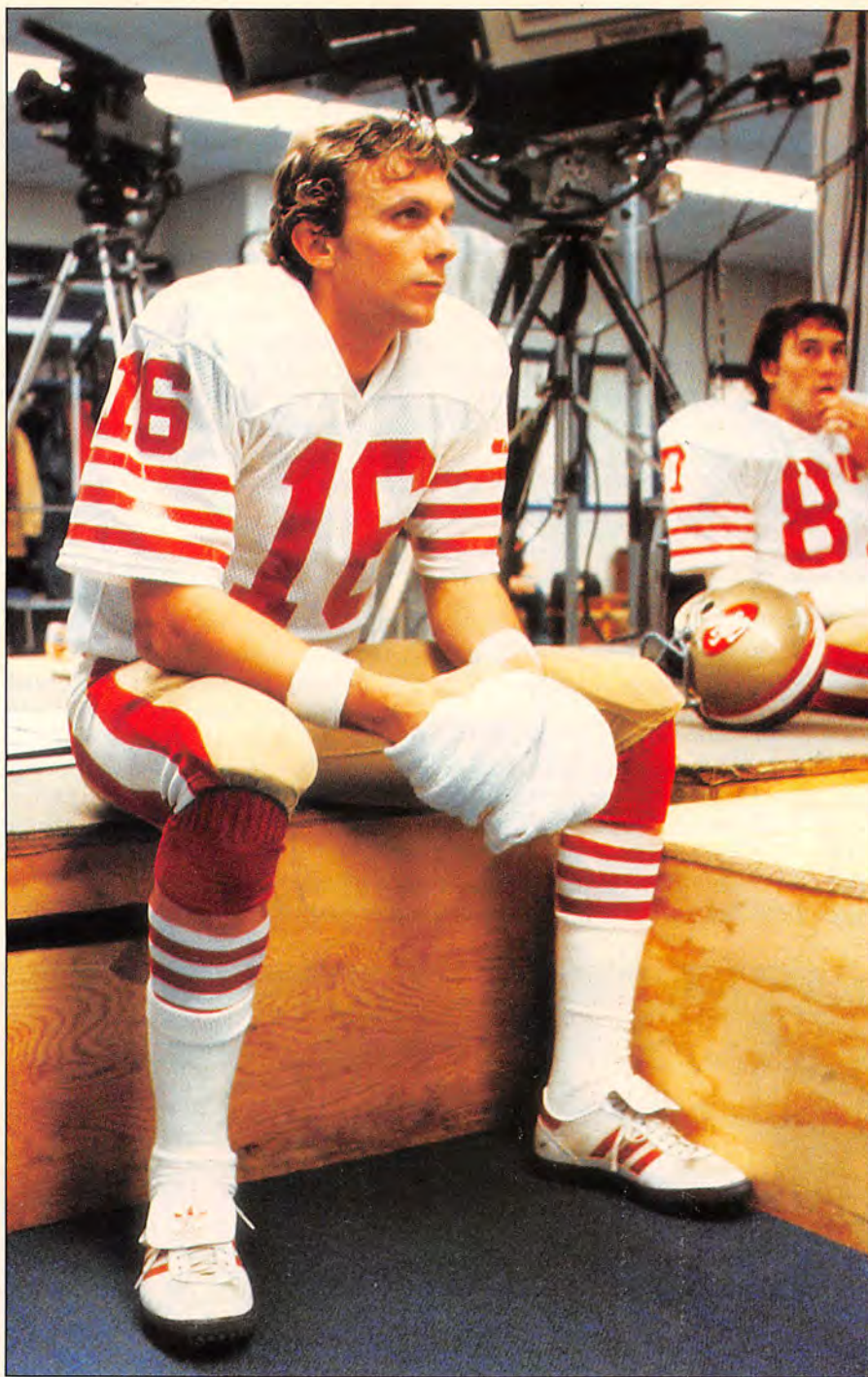
The 49ers did. Walsh often has said this was his least talented Super Bowl team. “We



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**Up 20-0 at the half, Montana and Clark are unruffled in SB XVI.**

had very little firepower," he says. "Everything was geared to a five- to seven-yard gain, so we had to execute perfectly. And, of course, we had Joe, who was so resourceful. Even when a play broke down he was able to improvise and get something out of it."

The first time the 49ers got the ball they scored, going 68 yards, using an unbalanced line for the first time and often catching Cincinnati in the wrong defense. Montana threw on five of the first six plays and capped the drive with a quarterback sneak for the score. In the second quarter the 49ers marched 92 yards for a touchdown to make it 14-0, with Montana throwing to Earl

Cooper for the touchdown. Two more drives got them field goals to make it 20-0 at halftime.

"Again, it was the machinelike precision of the offense that Joe directed," says Walsh. "It was diversity and execution, and Joe was the primer who could make the delicate play when he had to. Our drives in the first half of that Super Bowl were comparable to the drive against Dallas. Joe was letter-perfect."

Cross remembers it much the same way. "We had everything going," he says. "Joe was hitting everything in sight. We were laughing and giggling—and then, in the second half, it turned into a football game."

Walsh had always regarded the Bengals as a much superior team physically—"I think they had something like 10 first-round picks playing"—and Cincinnati started to prove that in the second half. The Bengals scored two touchdowns and were just stopped on a great play in the second half when the 49ers got the ball with a little more than 10 minutes remaining in the game.

On the sidelines, the 49ers knew what had to be done—and they were itching to meet the challenge. "I don't think there was ever a moment of doubt," says Keith Fahnhorst, an offensive tackle in that game, "but I was getting a little nervous. We had to cool them off and get some momentum going."

As usual, it was Montana who did it. Because Cincinnati had been able to put so much pressure on Joe, Walsh called what he terms a "drift" pattern: Montana rolled right to get away from the pass rush; Mike Wilson cut to the inside, then to the sideline, and caught the ball at the 44, right in front of the Cincinnati bench. Bengals coach Forrest Gregg screamed at the officials because he thought Wilson was out of bounds, but the call stood. "That was a great play," says Cross, "one that couldn't have been made by many players—at either end of the play. It gave us some breathing room."

From that point the 49ers went to their running game, knowing they had only to get another field goal to put the game out of reach. Ray Wersching got that field goal and another one later. The Bengals scored a touchdown but fell short 26-21.

Montana won the first of his record three Super Bowl most valuable player awards. He completed 14 of 22 passes for 157 yards, one touchdown, and no interceptions. Joe wasn't impressed, though. "Winning the first Super Bowl was great, but the game wasn't that great," he said years later. "So, it was a little disappointing in that sense, but it was still great to win it." —G.D.

**Fast fact:**  
Favorite  
high school  
sport was  
basketball.



## **Our Day Will Come: The 'Other Quarterback' Gets the Last Laugh**

**A** STRANGE THING HAPPENED to Montana when the 49ers went 15-1 in 1984 and swept through the playoffs to reach the Super Bowl for the second time: He was virtually ignored. The other quarterback in the Super Bowl was the Miami Dolphins' Dan Marino, who had set



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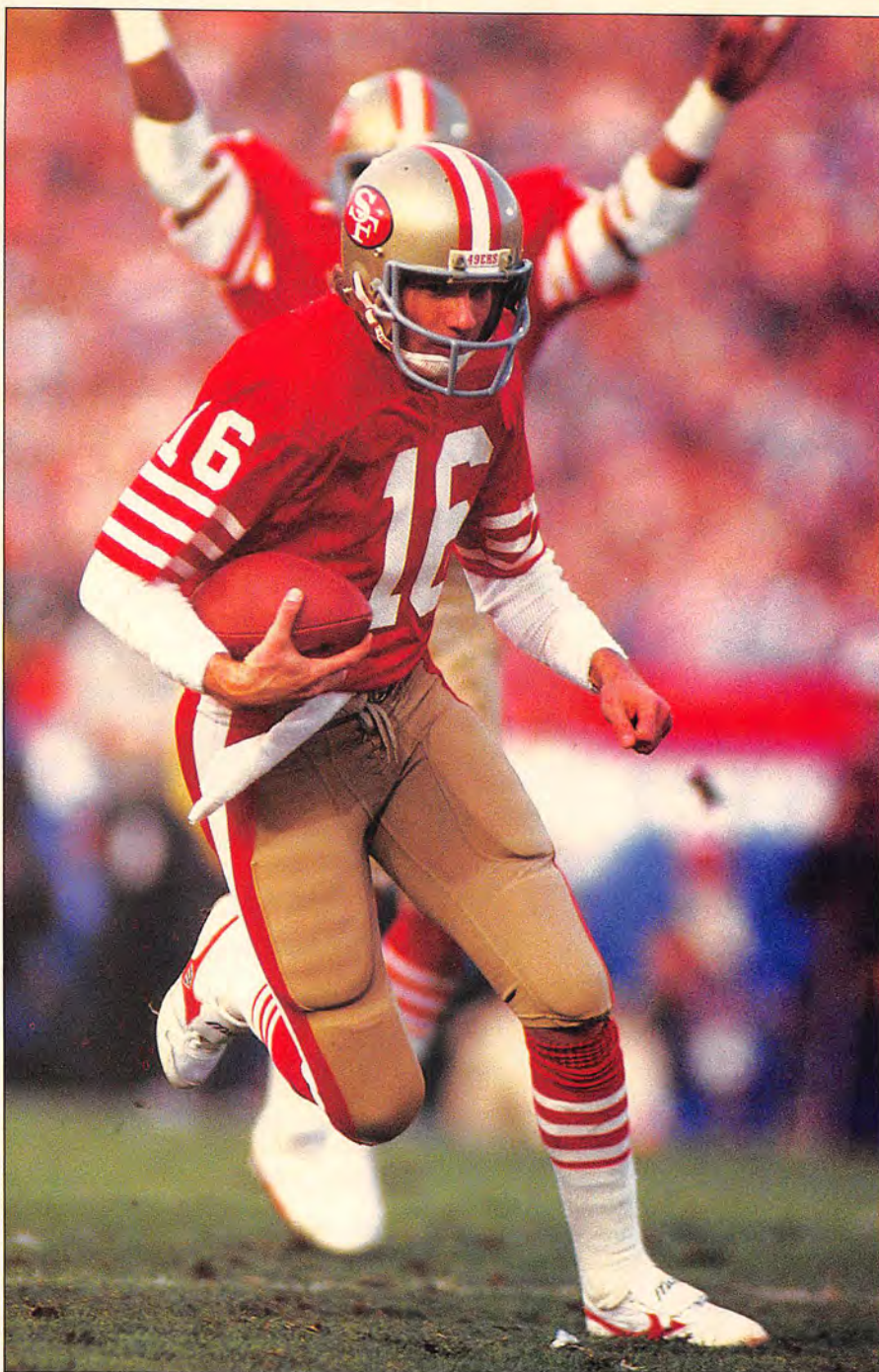
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**Montana shredded Miami for 59 rushing yards in Super Bowl XIX.**

an NFL record with 48 touchdown passes that season.

"This was probably the first time that Joe was the 'other quarterback,'" Cross says with a laugh. "Everybody was talking about Marino and his receivers, Mark Clayton and Mark Duper, and how great the Miami offense was. It was going to be the Miami offense against the 49ers defense and, oh, yes, the 49ers would get the ball once in a while.

"Joe took a lot of this to heart. He was highly motivated by the lack of respect—that was typical of that year. We had by far the best team in the league, but we really didn't get recognized for that. If we'd been on

the East Coast we would have been enshrined."

Montana's time would come. Though the media didn't recognize it, the 49ers were far superior physically to the Dolphins. Walsh said that, when he walked by the Dolphins before the game, he thought that Don Shula had really worked a miracle to get his team there.

The Dolphins also played a defense that could not stop the 49ers, double-covering wide receivers and leaving linebackers to cover running backs on pass patterns. "When we saw the films of Miami, we couldn't wait to play them," Cross recalls. "We knew they couldn't stop our running

game, and they would have to cover running backs on pass plays with their inside linebackers, which was a real mismatch."

The Miami defense had another flaw: When the linebackers turned their backs to follow the 49ers backs on pass plays, they couldn't watch Montana. "Just before the game," says Walsh, "I told Joe to look for that. I didn't want him running indiscriminately, but if he saw the opening he was free to take off."

"Joe took advantage of every opportunity in that game," says Cross. "Every time there was a problem Joe scrambled, and not just for positive yardage but for big plays."

Montana ran five times for 59 yards in the game, and his runs set up two of the first three 49ers touchdowns. On one 20-yard run, which came right in front of the 49ers bench, there were three men running in tandem down the sideline—Roger Craig, the linebacker covering him, and Montana. The linebacker never knew Joe was there.

"They just couldn't stop Joe, whatever he wanted to do," says Walsh. "One time, for instance, I remember he wanted to throw downfield and couldn't find a receiver, so he threw an outlet pass to Wendell Tyler, and Wendell quickly dashed through the secondary and turned it into a 25-yard gain."

The game quickly turned into a rout—the 49ers eventually won 38-16—and the question became: How many Super Bowl offensive records can be set? The 49ers got one with 537 total yards, Craig got two (three touchdowns, 18 points), and Montana got two more (331 passing yards and most rushing yards by a quarterback), as he again was named the game's MVP.

"That was the kind of game you like to be involved in," Montana says, "because everything went the right way for us. That's a great memory because we had such a great day offensively."  
—G.D.

**Fast fact:**  
Won first  
NFL title  
at the age  
of 25.



### **This Time Montana's Heroics Took Even His Own Breath Away**

**T**HE 49ERS' THIRD SUPER Bowl, in January 1989, was called by many the most exciting to that point, but it was exciting only because the 49ers, much superior to the Cincinnati Bengals, didn't play their game offensively. The 49ers moved the ball throughout the game—they outgained the Bengals





**By Super Bowl XXIII, press conferences were like family reunions for Montana and the national media.**

451-229—but penalties and botched plays kept them from scoring a touchdown in the first three quarters. So, they found themselves trailing 16-13 with just 3:10 left in the game and the ball on their own eight-yard line. The touchdown drive that followed was almost a mirror image of the one against Dallas in the 1981 NFC Championship Game, but it was accomplished with even less time.

"I didn't think there was any doubt that we could get a field goal and tie the game," says Cross, "but anybody who thought we could drive 92 yards for a touchdown, well, he had to be smoking something. Throughout that game Joe had been pretty much right on, but we had made a lot of stupid mistakes that had hurt us. I think there was a lot of frustration, for Joe and the rest of us, but we knew that with our offense we could move the ball."

"We didn't tell Joe anything," Walsh says. "It was strictly going back to those things we'd developed over so many years, plays we knew we could execute well. Joe had

done that before, and he was going to be even better now than in some of his other big games because of his experience and confidence, plus the fact that we had some players who could make big plays, like Jerry Rice."

"At times like that," says Montana, "you get into a certain mode on the field and everything else is blocked out, like how much time is left. It's really secondary at that point. You're really trying to live each play for that play and not looking forward to the next play, because if you don't keep the ball moving you won't have anything. I guess you can call it living for the moment."

However, even the famed Joe Cool isn't totally immune to pressure, and he showed it on that drive, hyperventilating at one point early in the drive. "It was crazy," he says. "It had never happened to me before. I guess it was the excitement, maybe a little bit of the weather [the heat in Miami]. At that point you couldn't hear, so I was yelling plays at the top of my voice. Maybe it was because I used all of my oxygen—I had to call every-

thing about eight times—and it took everything I had. I was just standing there, and I went blank. I thought I was going to completely pass out."

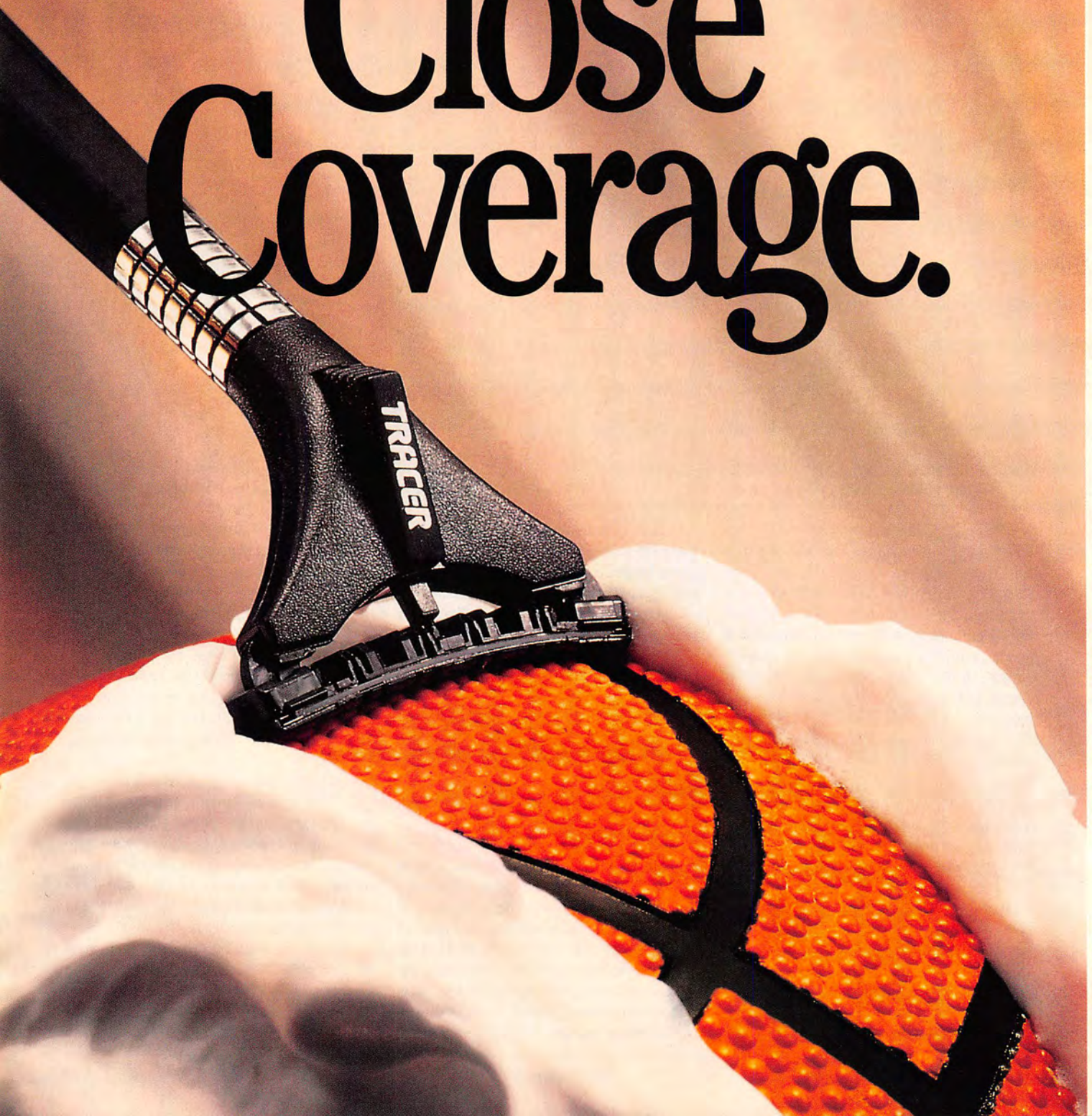
"When I walked up to the center I thought for sure I was going to call time out. Then, my head seemed to clear, but as I took the snap that dizzy feeling came back. If you've held your breath too long or stood up too quickly, that's what it felt like. So I just stepped back and threw it in Jerry's direction."

His teammates, though, didn't even notice. "The Joe I remember is the exact same Joe who was in the huddle for the Dallas drive, or for any other key games we'd played," says Cross. "There was nothing out of the ordinary. And he treated that drive the same way he'd treat a two-minute drill in practice at training camp."

The key play on the drive was a 27-yard pass to Rice that brought the ball to the Cincinnati 18. Montana hit John Taylor for the final 10 yards and the winning touchdown with just 34 seconds in the game.



At Last.  
Close  
Coverage.

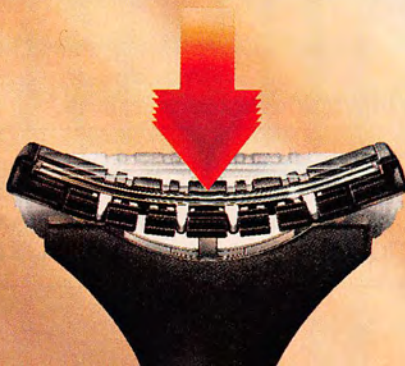






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Montana had had another superb Super Bowl, completing 23 of 36 passes for 357 yards and two touchdowns with no interceptions, but this was the only one of his Super Bowls in which he was not the MVP. That award went to Rice, who caught 11 passes for a game record 215 yards. Many in the press box felt that Rice and Montana should have shared the award.

—G.D.



## Years in the Spotlight Can Leave You Feeling A Little Burned

**T**HE MEMORY ENDURES OF JOE Montana as a fresh-faced star in the 49ers' magical season of 1981. Montana was in his third NFL season, the 49ers were only in their first year as a winning team, and the clock never struck 12 for this Cinderella.

This was long before Eddie DeBartolo Jr. even thought of building the palatial \$15 million complex that serves now as the team's headquarters. Each day during the

ters for the horde of media that suddenly descended on the team. Montana was the player most in demand, and the sky normally was dark long before he was finished. It was not an unusual sight to see him on the lawn outside the building, visible only in the klieg lights of a television cameraman as he gave one last interview.

Much has changed through the years. Montana is no longer the most available of athletes; to the contrary, his contacts with the media are quite limited nowadays. That's only part of the story, though; Montana's high visibility has brought about more significant changes in his life. He has, he says, been forced to become much more cautious in dealing with people in all kinds of situations.

"It's real unfair," he says. "You just never know. Every day in life, I think, everybody has to be careful about other people. Unfortunately, that's the way the world is turning right now, and it's more so for people in the public eye. Anybody can do about anything they want, and you have to fight it to prove that it's wrong. That's the unfair part."

Montana is not comfortable in the spotlight. He worries about his three young children. He won't let the youngsters play in their front yard because "people are always coming by, stopping and sitting and watching." Sometimes they do more than sit and watch. Montana has been having a new home

neighbors wandered through when construction left part of the house exposed.

Last offseason, at the Montanas' home in Redwood City, things weren't much fun, either. "We had windows shot out of our car and out of our house [by] people with BB guns," Montana says. "And then four guys chased our nanny into our house. They were in our jacuzzi. The jacuzzi's outside, and I guess they heard her come in. Then they broke a few beer bottles around the house."

When he goes out with his family, Montana tends to go to familiar places, such as one of the small neighborhood restaurants in which the Montanas have become regular patrons. He hoped that this familiarity would cut down on star-gazing, but autograph seekers or chatty fans still tend to interrupt. Montana has become adept at handling those situations, though. He credits Magic Johnson with teaching him how to decline while explaining that he will send an autograph if they write to him at the 49ers. It would take less time to sign one than to explain, he says, but one invariably would lead to many more. He's even toying with the idea of having cards preprinted with the 49ers' address that he could hand out.

"It gets frustrating sometimes," he says, "because you're like everybody else—it's hard to be in a good mood every day, 24 hours a day. When you're out in public sometimes, you just want to go do what you've got to do."

"If you want to go shopping, or get some clothes, you want to go do it, get it done, and go. Then there are other days you feel normal. People think you're the same way all the time, so that's hard." —IRA MILLER



**Joe and wife Jennifer must be wary of a few overzealous 'fans.'**

playoffs, groups of 49ers players would be led around the corner from the old training complex to a municipal recreation building that had been commandeered as headquar-

built in one of the highbrow cities around Palo Alto on the peninsula south of San Francisco. He says gawkers have been jumping over a fence to get a closer look, and that



## How Many More Hits Can the Man Take Before He Takes One Too Many?

**T**HE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION took place last winter in Hawaii. Montana and his family were eating dinner in a restaurant when a solicitous waitress noticed the cast on his hand, which had been broken in the NFC Championship Game. Failing to recognize her famous customer, she asked how the injury had happened.

"Playing football," Montana replied.

The waitress took another look at him.





**Despite injuries, Montana says he's not ready for the easy chair.**

"Aren't you a little old to be playing football?" she asked.

There's something about Montana that brings out such reactions. He looks fragile, almost frail. His legs appear to be thin sticks. However, looks are deceiving.

"That's why he went in the third round, not the first round," says Floyd Peters, the

Tampa Bay defensive coordinator, referring to Montana's draft position in 1979. "Everybody said what a great athlete he was, but he was so skinny. They figured he was going to get busted up, but he was really gifted at running and skating, getting away, and that's how he survived the early part of his career."

Montana still survives today. His hand

healed during the offseason, and although he wouldn't have been able to play in the Super Bowl if the 49ers had made it, he'll be ready for the 1991 season opener. As a matter of fact, in Montana's entire athletic career—dating from his playground days in Monongahela, Pa.—he never before had suffered a broken bone until last January, when Leonard Marshall of the New York Giants knocked him out of the NFC title game. "He's really very wiry, and he trains very hard," says Mike Holmgren, the 49ers offensive coordinator.

Montana's most famous "injury" was the back surgery that caused him to miss eight games in 1986, but that condition developed over a period of time and was not the result of a single incident. He also has had a series of minor surgeries on his elbow, knees, and shoulder, but came back strongly each time.

Ever since the back problem Montana has undertaken a more rigorous weight training program involving a higher number of repetitions, not more weight. He says it was a "dumb reaction" to the surgery "because I didn't get hurt getting hit," but adds, "I think what happened was it made me realize I do have to maintain my body more than I thought I had to." Aside from the back surgery, Montana has missed as many as two consecutive games only once in his career, when Walsh was coaching the 49ers

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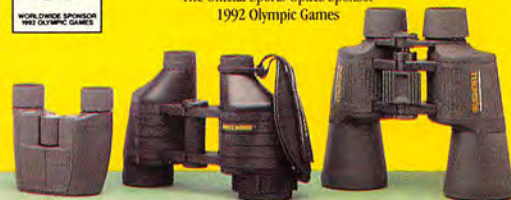
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—and he still insists today he could have played in those games.

"Fragile? No," says Peters. "Everybody loses a step when they get older—everybody slows down and gets old, period—but he's still an amazing guy. I know one thing: He's a tough son of a gun to come back from the different operations he's had."

"I think everybody would like to have a quarterback as fragile as Joe," says Jim Finks, general manager of the New Orleans

someone in the NFL who thinks they will crumble as long as Montana remains the quarterback. Still, the task he faces in 1991 is daunting, even for him.

During the offseason the 49ers underwent their biggest transition since winning their first Super Bowl championship. A flock of veterans who played key roles on championship teams—Ronnie Lott, Roger Craig, Matt Millen, Keena Turner, Eric Wright, Mike Wilson—is gone. Those six players

In the NFL's recent past, teams have found it particularly difficult to carry their dynasties to a new decade. It's probably just a coincidence, but the dawning of new decades in the NFL recently has meant the dawning of new dynasties—including the 49ers themselves just 10 years ago, in 1981.

Green Bay won its last championship in 1967, had a winning record in 1969, then fell to last place in 1970. The Packers had only two winning seasons in the '70s. Pittsburgh won the last of its four championships in 1979, then fell to .500 by 1981 and hasn't been a serious contender again.

Consider, also, what has happened to the great quarterbacks. Terry Bradshaw left Pittsburgh with an elbow problem. Ken Stabler bounced from team to team, playing wherever Bum Phillips coached. Injury helped undo Y.A. Tittle. Johnny Unitas and Joe Namath, East Coast legends, wound up fading out in Southern California. Can Montana, at age 35, buck the odds?

"He can play as long as he continues to play like he's playing now, and I don't know how long that is," says Fritz Shurmur, the former Rams and present Cardinals defensive coordinator. "He certainly demonstrated that last year with the number of wins they had, how they won, and the number of plays he made. He has proved to be other than human in a lot of ways, and so [he] might be in longevity, too."

Certainly, in the past, Montana has shown an ability to adapt to a changing scene. He won with ever-changing casts in the '80s. He won with two completely different offensive lines. He won throwing to Dwight Clark, and he won throwing to Jerry Rice. He won handing off to Wendell Tyler and to Roger Craig and, way back in '81, to virtually no one. However, now when Montana looks around him, what does he see? There's not a proven NFL ball carrier on the roster. There are several areas of little or no depth. Where the 49ers used to have high-priced veterans sitting on the bench just in case they were needed, now they have youngsters fighting for a spot on the roster.

"Hopefully, the atmosphere and the type of play won't change," Montana says. "As far as losing guys like Ronnie and Roger and Keena and Eric, guys who have been around here a long time . . . We'll miss them a lot from the character side as well as the playing side. It's hard to replace somebody like Ronnie just for what he brings to the defense. Hopefully we won't have a struggle. Everybody keeps predicting that."

Well, not everybody. Finks, for example, says this of Montana: "The second half of the '88 season, then in '89 and '90, this guy played that position as well, if not better, than anybody who ever played in this league. He didn't make the big error; he made the



**The 49ers defense, long a strong point, will be very thin this year.**

Saints. "He answers the bell as many times as any quarterback that I can think of.

"The thing you overlook is Joe rarely gets himself in a position where he takes a hard lick. He knows where to get rid of the ball. Sure, he gets nailed at times, but he rarely gets himself in a position where he takes a shot that really can hurt him." —I.M.

have 22 Super Bowl rings among them, counting Millen's two with the Raiders. This is not business as usual. The 49ers, the most generous franchise in the NFL, are tightening the belt. Most of the cutbacks are coming in nonplaying areas, but even some of the players' cherished perks, such as single rooms on the road, are threatened.

"I still feel comfortable with the fact that we're going to have what we need to do well," says coach George Seifert. "I've not had any sense that there are going to be cutbacks that will not allow us to still be first-class, not allow us to still have the players that we need."

Club owner DeBartolo took heat for letting Lott and Craig go to the Los Angeles Raiders as Plan B free agents because fans and some columnists saw dollar signs behind it. In fact, though, the decisions were much more complex than that.

What the moves did make clearer than ever, however, was that as the 49ers move on into the new decade Montana is their constant, and rarely have they asked more of him. They want him to hold it together, to keep winning while they are plugging in new players—and, oh, Joe, by the way, if you falter, we have this back-up quarterback being paid \$2 million.



## The 49ers' Rudder As They Sail Through a Sea Of Change

**T**HIS COULD BE MONTANA'S biggest challenge. He has won with a team on the rise, and he has won with a team at the top. Now he's being asked to win while staving off decline.

Make no mistake about it: The 49ers are a team in decline. Gradual decline, perhaps, but decline, nonetheless. They do have one undeniable advantage: It's hard to find



big play. He kept drives going. He brought 'em back. That's the great shot in the arm clubs have to have.

"There's a period of time in every game where the team can go either way. Either it can go to the outhouse by the quarterback giving up or throwing another interception, or it can turn a game around by the quarterback coming up with a big play. Joe always came up with the big play and got 'em going. He wouldn't let 'em quit.

"They'll still be good as long as No. 16 is playing," Finks adds. "I'm tired of playing against him."

—I.M.



## It Ain't What You Do, It's the Way That You Do It

THE LINE BETWEEN GENIUS and idiot in the NFL is indeed a thin one. In 1989, his first season as offensive coordinator of the 49ers, Holmgren got rave reviews for making changes in the offense that resulted in more passes to tight ends and fewer interceptions. How-

season ranked second in offense in the NFL, based on yards gained, but nonetheless critics were saying the team's attack had grown stale.

No way, says Holmgren.

"I think the system and what we do is very diversified," he says. "I don't think we're stale. We're always trying as a staff to add new things. George [49ers coach George Seifert] wouldn't allow us to get stale. There's a danger of that, I think, if you've been at a certain place for 15 years or so, but shoot, I've only been coordinator for two years."

Finks agrees. Indeed, he points out that the 49ers offense "was not unique in the first place."

"Execution is what carried them," Finks says. "They were a pretty basic team when they were winning those Super Bowls. They weren't a gimmick club or a tricky club. The only difference last year was they couldn't move the ball on the ground." That naturally caused the 49ers offense to look stale, because without a running game they had few options, but it wasn't done by design.

No one outside the 49ers knows their offense better than Shurmur, who faced the 49ers at least twice a year during his tenure with the Rams. Ask Shurmur if the 49ers offense is stale and you get a fatherly smile. "I don't think 'stale' applies to those people at all," he says. "They have made subtle changes each year in their offense."



Craig's flop last year left San Francisco's vaunted attack a bit flat.

ever, in 1990, when the 49ers were done in by, among other things, their failure to develop a running game, Holmgren came in for some flak. San Francisco wound up the

Shurmur just happened to be the man most responsible for revealing the 49ers' weakness, however. San Francisco had a 10-0 record last season until it ran into the

Rams, who, because of the 49ers' no-run offense and their own defensive line problems, played a nickel defense the entire game. The Rams beat the 49ers in that game, and the 49ers' remaining 1990 opponents used the same basic tactic against them, with a fair degree of success.

Some have suggested that perhaps, when the 49ers bogged down late in the year, they could have benefited from a dose of back-up quarterback Steve Young's scrambling, similar to the way mobile quarterback Jeff Hostetler came off the bench to give the New York Giants a new dimension. When you repeat that suggestion to Finks, though, you can hear him snicker over the phone from 2,000 miles away.

"The Giants got as far as they did and won it because of their devastating ground game," he says. "They just nicked and dined [opponents] to death. Then, when they got to a club who could stand in the trenches with 'em, Hostetler moved around and made some plays.

"They always said what a great athlete he was and how he could move around, but I think Hostetler even surprised them. He gave them an added dimension. Phil Simms was almost a sitting pigeon, and this kid gave them that dimension at the right time. Still, they got where they did by playing a hammer-and-tong offense, almost single-wing football."

"There's no way of proving this, but I really think that Simms would have gotten them there, too," adds Cleveland vice president Ernie Accorsi. "I don't think that was the reason they won. They won on defense and the running game, and their kicker was hot."

Further, Finks points out, the 49ers and Giants offenses were not comparable. Putting Young into the more open style of offense played by San Francisco would not have been the change that Hostetler was for New York. Holmgren agrees with that. "When Steve's come in and played, we don't change the offense," Holmgren says. "The Giants changed their offense. I'm sure they changed their offensive philosophy. It's a different deal."

At any rate, the 49ers think they know what they have to do to avoid being called "stale" again: run the ball. No wonder Seifert says he and his staff spent extra time during the past offseason working on the running game. "Not to say we neglected [the running game] a year ago, but I just think we have to account for [it] that much more," Seifert says. "Where [the inability to run] affected us more than anything was psychologically, because we heard about it all the time.

"Two years ago we had a couple of games left, so we just concentrated and ran the ball





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## Find Someone Better If You Can, But No One Gives My Job Away

**N**OTHING GETS UNDER MONTANA's skin more than suggestions the 49ers should play Young more, either as a part-timer or as part of a two-quarterback system. It's hard to imagine Montana taking a personal attack more personally than he takes those suggestions that Young should play.

injured or ineffective. Says Seifert, "I'm not going to just pull him out."

Young's problem is that Montana wants to play all the time, even when there is no need for him to or when prudence suggests a rest. Last season, for example, Montana played virtually all the way in the season's first 14 games. The 49ers, with a 13-1 record, had wrapped up home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs, and the pundits were saying that Joe needed some rest and that Young should get some playing time.

This is what Montana said: "I don't think you see the Giants or Miami saying, 'We've got to get our back-up some playing time.' Steve's a good quarterback, and when you accept that [back-up] role, part of the role, unfortunately, is not getting much playing time. This is the only place I've ever heard of where they want the back-up to get playing time. I'm sure it's great for Steve, but that's not part of the role description in that job."

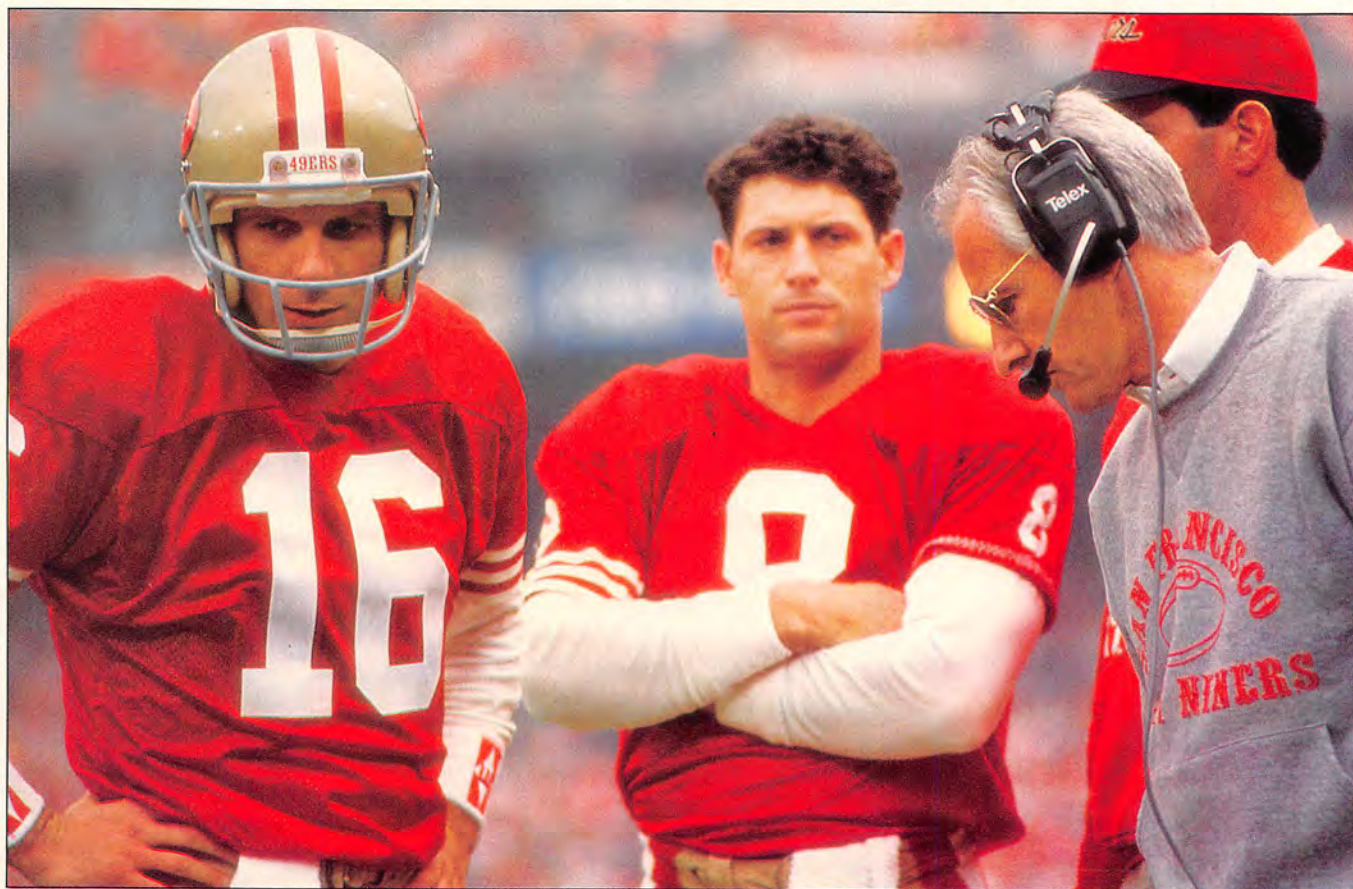
Montana always has guarded his playing time jealously, but never more so than since

sons he never challenged Montana's position, other than to say repeatedly he wanted to play, but this spring Young said his contract negotiations included "a lot of hard talk [that] aired out a lot of emotional feelings that we had kept under wraps for a long time because I thought it was good for the team." In other words, Young feels his time has arrived.

"I think they expect me to play, and I expect to play," says Young, "It's probably a little bit of a risk, but I rolled the dice on this one. I didn't sign to sit down; I feel I'm one of the better players in the league. It's time to prove that."

Some have suggested a two-quarterback system would be the answer, but Holmgren doesn't agree with that idea at all.

"I'm not sure I'm the guy to do it, because I believe, and I've told both of them, that you have to hand the ball to one guy and get the other guy ready to play as best you can," he says. "Historically in the NFL there probably have been situations where two quarter-



**Time's a-wastin': Young [8] is impatient with meager scraps of playing time from Montana and Seifert.**

Young will be 30 in October, though, and he's starting to see his own career slip away. He believes he has six or seven years left—as a successful starter—and is eager to get going. Barring the unexpected, however, the 49ers say nothing has changed, despite Young's new two-year, \$4.5 million contract. Young will play this season only if Montana is

1988, the year of the 49ers' great quarterback controversy. As the '91 season unfolds, there is potential for turmoil once more.

Young signed a new contract last spring that calls for \$2 million this year. At the time he sounded very much like he would no longer be content in the role of pliant back-up. During Young's previous four sea-

backs played, but usually it's not a healthy thing."

But how long can Montana go on?

"When I first got here in 1986 and he hurt his back, I thought I'd never get a chance to coach him," Holmgren says. "Remember, when we got Steve the next year it was because a lot of the feeling was Joe might not





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be able to play. But now, I think if he could stay like last season, without getting big injuries, he probably could play as long as he could maintain his enthusiasm."

Of course, that scenario leaves Young in limbo again. When will he get his shot?

"That's a good question," Holmgren says. "I think [Young] approaches every season the same way, and I think that every year, as Joe gets older, Steve probably feels a little more like he's going to get a chance to play—more than, say, from an injury. What he's feeling is he's getting older, too."

Holmgren concedes there will come a time to begin working Young in, but he's not ready to predict when that time will be. He says it will come "when Joe's level of performance isn't what either he expects of himself or we expect of him."

"We're looking, Joe's looking at it, George is looking at it, I'm looking certainly. And his level of play the last three or four years has been really outstanding."

Ironically, Young may be part of the reason for that. During Young's contract negotiations, his agent, Leigh Steinberg, said Steve was in "a Catch-22 situation." Young, Steinberg said, wanted to remain with the 49ers and to become their eventual starter—but as long as Young was pushing him, Montana would continue to play. Steinberg felt Young's presence served as a catalyst for an aging Montana, and Montana does not entirely disagree with that perception. Many longtime Montana watchers maintain that Joe has played the best football of his career in the years since Young began his long wait in the wings—and Montana plans to keep it that way.

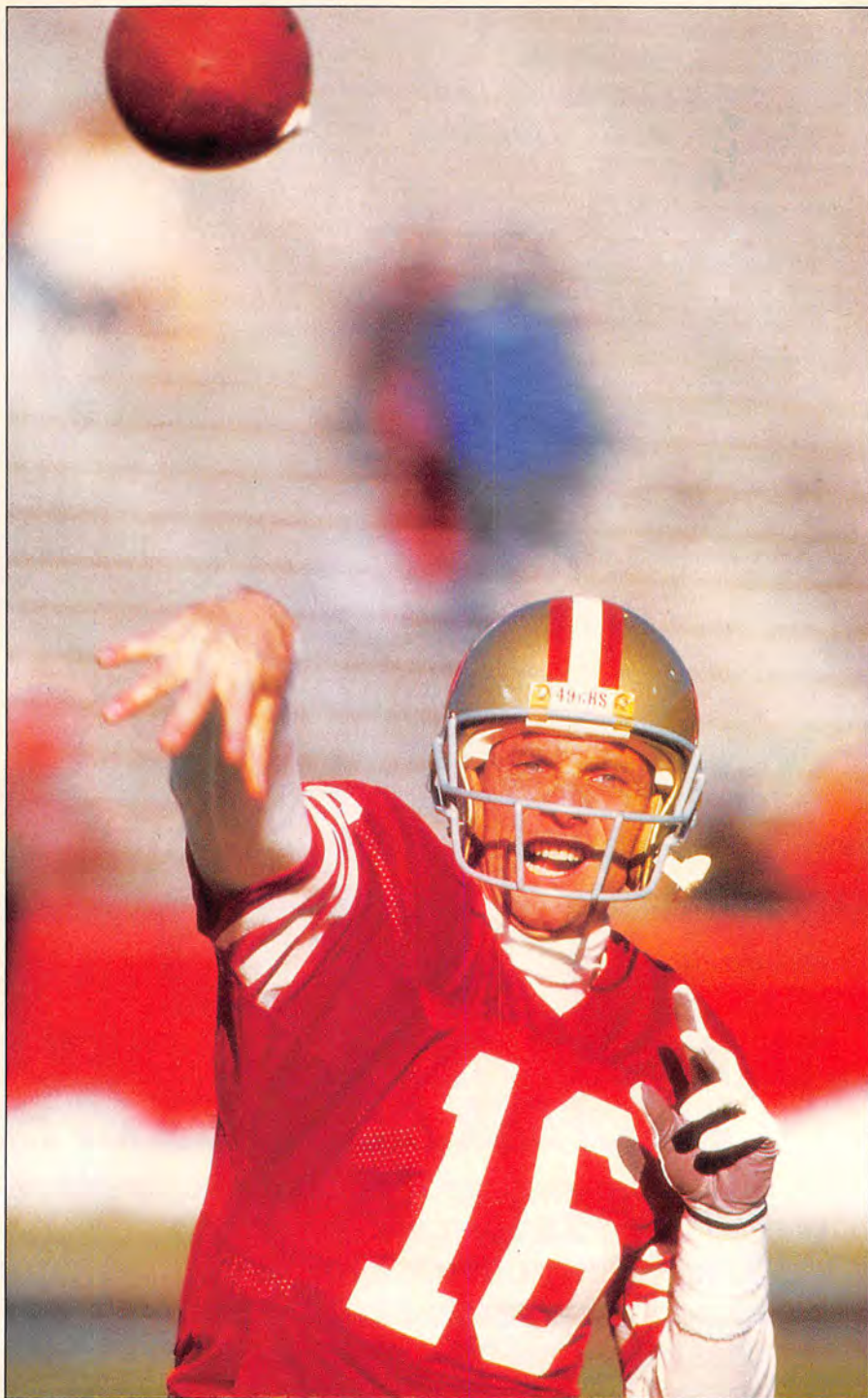
"I don't know whether it's the case or not, but it's been like someone's trying to give him the job," Montana says. "I've had to work hard to get where I am, and he probably is a catalyst. I just made up my mind it was going to be hard for anybody to get it until I decided it was time." —I.M.

**Fast fact:**  
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## The Veteran's Dilemma: Should I Stay or Should I Go?

**T**HE SAN FRANCISCO FANS held their collective breath on that Sunday afternoon at Candlestick Park last January, just as they had on another January Sunday at Giants Stadium four years earlier. When Montana gets crushed,



**Don't let go: 'When you've left the game, you've left it forever.'**

49ers fans wince. The first time Jim Burt applied the hit, and Montana was hospitalized overnight. This time it was Leonard Marshall, and the results were a broken hand (which required surgery) and broken hearts in the Bay area.

Montana doesn't need this aggravation anymore, so why does he do it? Following surgery on his back in 1986, even his surgeon suggested he might be better off thinking about retirement than continuing to subject his body to the beating an NFL quarterback takes. At 35, he has nothing left to prove. He has his four Super Bowl rings,

he has his lovely wife and three kids, and he has lots of money that he has collected as a player for the 49ers and as a pitchman for many products. Yet he continues to play.

He has more than enough money to retire and live comfortably. In fact, Montana is in such good financial shape that 49ers president Carmen Policy humorously suggests the 49ers aren't worried about life after Montana. When Joe's ready to retire, Policy says, Montana simply will buy in and become a co-owner with DeBartolo. "We don't even think about life without Joe," Policy says.





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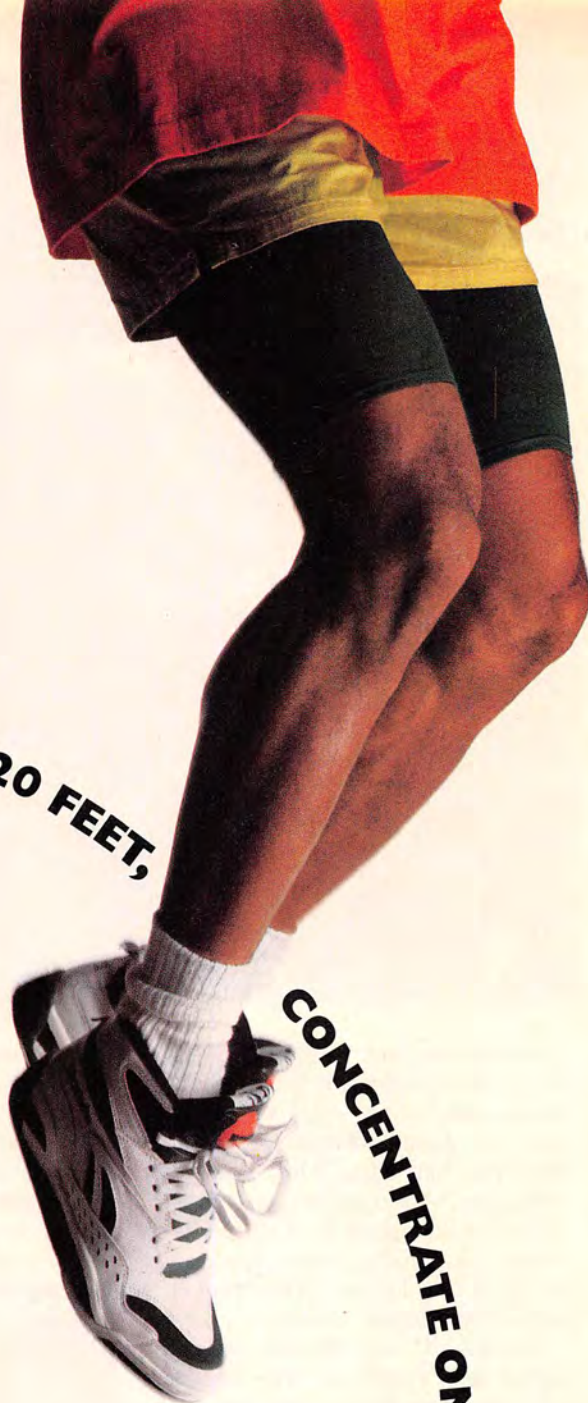
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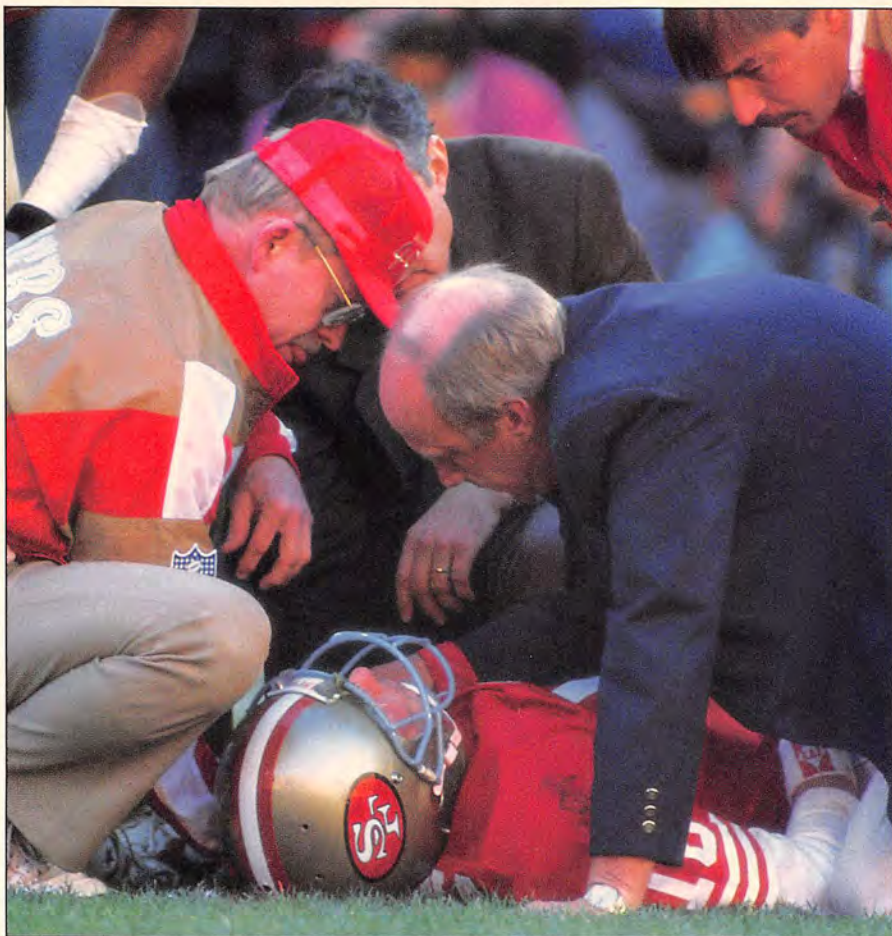


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## Hey, no pain, no gain: Montana would rather fight than quit.

the motions. He doesn't dread practice. He's good in the locker room. He maintains his enthusiasm.

"That's why he can play at the level he plays at, I think, at this age. He's played a long time and sat through all the meetings, and there's not a whole lot I can say differently that he hasn't heard a thousand times, so he really must like playing the game."

Critics and opponents all have been waiting for Montana's age to start showing, and it hasn't. "He's still the best short passer in the business and has the quickest read," says Peters.

In 1989, at age 33, Montana had the best statistical passing year in NFL history. Many in the Bay area believed he was about to top himself in 1990, until the work of carrying the team on his arm wore him down late in the season. Even so, after some rest he returned for a magnificent performance in the divisional playoff victory over Washington before the 49ers' attempt for a third straight Super Bowl died on the toe of Matt Bahr.

Montana wants to play at least three more years; this season is the second year of a four-year, \$13 million contract that runs through the 1993 season. He says he'd "like to finish the contract and take it from there. I want to play as long as I can."

That could be a long time. And when the end does come, Montana does not expect to go quietly. Following his return in 1987 from back surgery, Montana said, referring to former Raiders quarterback Ken Stabler:

Someday, however, they won't have Joe. The question—especially in Atlanta, New Orleans, and Anaheim—is, when? And until then, why doesn't Montana act his age? What keeps him going? Why does he continue to play—and continue to want to play?

The way he explains it, it all sounds so simple. "I've played for so long, it's actually a part of my life," he says. "The career ends early in your lifetime. Eventually it's going to be over, and when it's over there's no coming back. People ask why an athlete hangs on and on. Because once you've left, you've left forever."

"There's something in the game that guys love to play and have enjoyed for so many years. You want to try and make it last."

Montana hasn't always wanted to play forever, but as he gets older, he says, the years become more precious to him. He says his wife, Jennifer, tells him the reason he still plays so well "is the fact I do feel like it's slipping away, slowly coming to an end. So you enjoy it more, you have more fun with it, and you relax with it. You do kind of savor it a little more." As a result of that attitude, Montana is enjoying a long twilight in his career, kind of a daylight-savings-time twilight. Holmgren says he wouldn't be surprised if Joe played till he was 40—five years away—although at that age, Holmgren concedes, Montana may have lost some of his ability to

bedevil opponents with his movement in the pocket and ability to throw on the run.

Why does Montana go on?

"He's well-paid," Holmgren says. "He really loves the game. That's corny, but he's still enthusiastic, still has fun playing. He has fun practicing. He's not going through

## Holmgren: 'Montana still loves the game, still has fun playing.'





"I'd like to be like 'The Snake' . . . All that gray hair, throwing sidearm until they kick me out of the league."

And yes, Montana says he still feels that way.  
—I.M.

**Fast fact:**  
35 games  
with three  
or more TD  
passes.



## New York Poses A Giant Challenge Unlike Any Other

**C**AN YOU RECALL THE 49ERS' 22-17 loss to the Eagles on September 3, 1983? Probably not, right? This game might seem like just one more battle, but it does have some special significance: It was the last time Montana opened the season at home.

The 49ers' invasion of the Meadowlands on Monday, September 2, marks the eighth consecutive season opener on the road for the team. However, any game against the Giants, not just a Monday night season opener, represents a challenge for Montana

**The 49ers-Giants matchup has  
been a bumpy one for Montana.**

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because (a) the Giants are defending Super Bowl champions, having dethroned the 49ers 15-13 in the NFC Championship Game last year, and (b) the Giants have given Montana more headaches (literally and figuratively) than any other opponent.

Montana's career record against the Giants isn't so bad. He's 8-4 after winning the

Then he saw New York storm back to win 21-17 and hand San Francisco a defeat he calls "one of the most disappointing we've ever had."

"We had our chances right up to the end," Montana says. "I didn't feel like we were pressing in the second half. We just didn't execute."

ning streak against New York to three with a 7-3 victory last December that was—depending upon your point of view—extremely dull or an epic defensive battle. It was a frustrating night for Montana, who completed just 12 of 29 passes for 152 yards. However, he did hit Taylor with a 23-yard scoring pass in the second half, and that was enough.

"We'll take it," he said afterward. "We didn't play very well offensively, but our defense was great. So was New York's defense. We'll have to get more untracked the next time."

Alas, the 49ers didn't have much more offense in the most recent meeting, last January at Candlestick Park. They did get the only touchdown of the game—a 61-yarder to Taylor—but the Giants managed five field goals, the last at the final gun, for a 15-13 victory. By then, Montana was bruised and battered and on the sidelines after a brutal sack by Marshall, the Giants defensive end. "I don't think he saw me coming," Marshall said.

The hit came with 10 minutes to go and San Francisco ahead 15-9. Marshall came in on Montana's right—his blind side—and buried him. Montana suffered a broken bone in his right hand and a bruised sternum. Even if the Niners had held on, he couldn't have played in Super Bowl XXV.

Much of the success the Giants defense had last year against Montana was credited to (1) defensive pressure that forced Montana to throw a split-second before he wished, (2) Collins' ability to stay with Rice better than any other cornerback in the league, and (3) defensive coordinator Bill Belichick's ability to disguise and vary pass rushes and coverages.

With Belichick now in Cleveland as the Browns' head coach, new defensive coordinator Al Groh faces a major task in his first game. In three previous games at the Meadowlands, the 78-yard prayer to Rice has been Montana's only touchdown pass. Come September 2, he'll have to at least double his career total if the 49ers are to start the season 1-0.

—BARRY WILNER

## MONTANA vs. THE GIANTS

| Date     | Site, Score              | Comp. | Atts. | Pct. | Yards | Avg. Gain | TDs | Ints. | Sacks/<br>Yards |
|----------|--------------------------|-------|-------|------|-------|-----------|-----|-------|-----------------|
| 11-23-80 | at San Francisco, 12-0   | .9    | 15    | .600 | 151   | 10.07     | 1   | 2     | 2/19            |
| 11-29-81 | at San Francisco, 17-10  | .27   | 39    | .692 | 234   | 6.00      | 0   | 0     | 3/20            |
| 1-3-82   | at San Francisco, 38-24* | .20   | 31    | .645 | 304   | 9.81      | 2   | 1     | 3/16            |
| 10-8-84  | at N.Y. Giants, 31-10    | .15   | 24    | .625 | 207   | 8.63      | 3   | 0     | 1/1             |
| 12-29-84 | at San Francisco, 21-10* | .25   | 39    | .641 | 309   | 7.92      | 3   | 3     | 4/28            |
| 12-29-85 | at N.Y. Giants, 3-17*    | .26   | 47    | .553 | 296   | 6.30      | 0   | 1     | 4/28            |
| 12-1-86  | at San Francisco, 17-21  | .32   | 52    | .615 | 251   | 4.85      | 1   | 1     | 0/0             |
| 1-4-87   | at N.Y. Giants, 3-49*    | .8    | 15    | .533 | 98    | 6.53      | 0   | 1     | 0/0             |
| 9-11-88  | at N.Y. Giants, 20-17    | .10   | 18    | .556 | 148   | 8.22      | 1   | 0     | 0/0             |
| 11-27-89 | at San Francisco, 34-24  | .27   | 33    | .818 | 292   | 8.85      | 3   | 0     | 2/7             |
| 12-3-90  | at San Francisco, 7-3    | .12   | 29    | .414 | 151   | 5.24      | 1   | 0     | 0/0             |
| 1-20-91  | at San Francisco, 13-15* | .18   | 26    | .692 | 190   | 7.31      | 1   | 0     | 3/14            |

\*Playoff games

Average game vs. Giants .....19.1 30.7 .622 219 7.15 1.3 0.8 1.8/9.5

Average game vs. rest of NFL .....17.6 27.6 .640 212 7.38 1.5 0.8 1.7/11.2

first five, losing three straight, and then winning three in a row before losing the NFC championship last January. "I've had some pretty good games against them, but I've also had some rough ones," Montana says. "You like to remember the good ones, like that Monday night game in 1989 [when he threw for three touchdowns in a 34-24 victory], but you have a hard time forgetting some others, especially when you get hurt."

Injuries have plagued Montana for about half of his career, now in its 12th year, and the Giants have put much of the hurt on No. 16. For example, take the most brutal incident, which occurred in a 49-3 playoff disaster at Giants Stadium on January 4, 1987.

New York was on its way to a Super Bowl title and was rolling over everyone. Montana got in the way early and was knocked out cold at the end of the first half by a savage but clean hit behind the line by Burt, the Giants nose tackle. (Ironically, Burt became a 49er two seasons later.) "I can sort of remember most of the first half, unfortunately," Montana says, "but I don't know anything about what happened in the second half." The play has made many highlight films, although none sponsored by the 49ers. Montana admits that it was the hardest hit he has ever taken.

For Montana, things never are normal against the Giants. He made a miraculous comeback from a back injury in 1986, when he led the Niners to a 17-0 halftime lead against New York in a Monday night affair.

At least he stayed in one piece that night. Montana had one of his best games, statistically, against New York, going 32-for-52 for 251 yards. However, he couldn't get anything going in the second half.

Unquestionably, the biggest play Montana has made against the Giants came in 1988. His numbers weren't anything special in their meeting at the Meadowlands in Week 2: 10-for-18 for 148 yards. In fact, he didn't even start; he replaced Steve Young to begin the second half. With 42 seconds left in the game, the Niners were at their own 22 and looking like a beaten team. A defeat would have been their fourth straight at the hands of the Blue Bullies. Then the 49ers took a big sip of Joe.

"I looked at Jerry [Rice] in the huddle, and he looked back at me with that confident look in his eyes," Montana says. Rice went deep, and Montana threw a perfect pass over the coverage of Mark Collins. Rice caught it at the Giants 45 and sped to victory. "Basically, it was four guys run flies," Montana says. "Jerry got a step on the guy on the right corner, and that was it."

"The guy didn't make a play all day, but then he does it on the last one," Collins said of Montana after the game. "I thought I had Rice. It was a perfectly thrown ball."

It was sweet vengeance for Montana. And he didn't get hurt.

San Francisco stretched its second win-

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# RUN FOR THE

By STEVE BISHEFF

**W**HEN RAGHIB ISMAIL, better known in leading social circles as "Rocket," ran his memorable postseason fly pattern—zipping past those golden Notre Dame memories, scurrying by all those startled National Football League representatives, and spiking the ball in downtown Toronto—football fans across America couldn't hide their disappointment. You mean we won't have Rocket's afterburners lighting up our TV screens on Sundays the way he used to on Saturdays? You mean no more blurring kick returns? No more acrobatic catches? No more flashy sprints from scrimmage with the game on the line?

Hey, no sweat, say his admirers from the good old U.S. of A. He'll be back soon enough. He won't like playing on those weird-sized fields, in front of those hockey-crazed Canadian fans. They go bananas over pucks in the net, not All-Americans in the endzone. They prefer 40-foot slapshots to 60-yard runbacks. I mean, get serious. They don't even get ESPN up there, do they?

Whether Ismail wants to admit it or not, the consensus is he made a terrible mistake signing that megabuck four-year contract with Bruce McNall and the Toronto Argonauts of the Canadian Football League. How many millions of dollars will he get? Is it 15? 20? 30? What difference does it really make? The bottom line is that the most exciting college football player of the era has left the country to pursue his professional career. It's like Jose Canseco bolting Oakland to play baseball in Japan, or Michael Jordan leaving Chicago to sign a lifetime deal with the Italian Basketball League. It's not only disappointing and unfair, it's—well, it's almost un-American. Isn't it?

Rocket doesn't think so. For him, this deal wasn't about pleasing the local populace. It wasn't about seeking his true football destiny. And it certainly wasn't about anything as serious as patriotism. It was just business. It was doing what looked right and felt right. It was signing with the people who made him feel at home, made him feel relaxed and confident about his future.

"It was something I was really comfort-

able with," says Ismail. "I was very impressed with Mr. McNall and all his people. They treated me with more respect than anyone else. This is definitely the move I wanted to make. First of all, it guaranteed lifetime financial security for my family right off. I was able to take care of my mother and my brother, and that was important to me.

"Secondly, I liked the fact the season up there is over by November 25 at the latest. That gave me a month and a half to get ready for finishing up at Notre Dame. It is very important to me to go back and get my degree in American Studies. I knew if I played somewhere else and was too worried about making the team I might not go back and get the degree, and I didn't want that to happen."

As Ismail talks, the conversation alternates between bubbly, almost giddy, enthusiasm and quiet but surprisingly insightful comments on human behavior. He comes off as a wonderful blend of a wide-eyed innocent and a mature and introspective young man.

One minute, when discussing his recent workout with San Francisco All-Pro Jerry Rice, the 5'10", 173-pound superstar looks and sounds like some 12-year-old who was just lucky enough to land an unexpected autograph: "They told me I was going to meet him, and I said, 'What? OK, OK, be cool. Be calm.' Then I went back to my hotel room and kept saying over and over again to myself, 'You're going to meet Jerry Rice. You're going to meet Jerry Rice.' When it finally happened, I rushed over, shook his hand, and just hugged him. Then I said to myself, 'Look at this man's body. Just look at it. It's like a Greek god. It's what Mercury must have looked like. He looks like he can fly, man. No wonder he's the best.'"

The next moment he can be talking about how friends think his eye-popping \$18.2 million guaranteed contract makes him different: "People keep coming up to me and saying, 'My God, all this money has to change you.' The funny thing is, it's the people around you who change. All of a sudden they're treating you as someone more important—like because you're a millionaire you've got to be treated in a certain way now. That's ridiculous to me, but I think

it shows a lot about how our society is. If you have money, people automatically think you have influence."

They automatically think you have great clothes and fancy cars, too. Rocket doesn't—or at least didn't.

"I think I've finally convinced him to go out and buy a suit," says one of the members of "Team Rocket," Ed Abram of Morcom Sports Enterprises in Oakland. "I'm telling you, I've had to practically force him to do it."

As far as a car is concerned, Ismail just giggles to himself. "I haven't had a car for 21 years, man," he says. "Why do I need one now? And if I do get one, I'll be straight with you: I'm not going to go crazy. I'll probably go out and get some demo from a dealership or something. I'm definitely not going to get me a Ferrari or anything. That's just not my style."

**R**OCKET'S STYLE, AS HE CALLS it, is just now evolving. It's just now emerging from the protective cocoon he was enveloped in at Notre Dame. After games, school public relations types often would shield him from the media, allowing him to hide in a corner while he was dressing, occasionally letting him slip out a side door, always careful not to let anyone close enough to find out what the real Ismail was all about.

It was our loss. As it turns out, Ismail has almost as much personality as he has raw talent. At times, they both come bursting out at such amazing speeds he can be difficult to assimilate all at once.

"You know what I want to be in the pros?" he asks, anxious to answer his own question. "Man, I want to be a hype receiver. You know what that means? 'Hype' means one of the best. But I also want to run back kicks and come out of the backfield, too. Eventually I want to be a real hype receiver and concentrate on that, but for now I'm still young. I want to do it all. I want to make some excitement. I want to keep people on the edge of their seats. I want to make it so people say, 'Oh, man, did you see that?' I want to make it so people who pay to see me enjoy what I'm doing. That'd be cool."

As cool as his new Nike commercial with Bo Jackson? Nah, cooler, hints Rocket, who



# BORDER

*Hey, Rocket Ismail wasn't snubbing the NFL when he flew to Canada. Like anyone just out of college, he opted for the best-paying job in his field of expertise*



clearly seems to be enjoying his carefully restructured lifestyle. Like Bo, Ismail is on his way to becoming a one-man conglomerate. Even if he won't go out and buy one, there are enough suits around him these days to start his own Brooks Brothers outlet. His rapidly growing entourage—eat your heart out, Iron Mike and Evander—has come to be known as “Team Rocket.” Basically, it includes:

(1) ProServ Inc., headed by David Falk and Jerry Solomon. This firm, located in Arlington, Va., primarily is responsible for Ismail's ever-growing endorsement deals. With a nickname such as “Rocket” and his Notre Dame reputation, he's a natural for TV, even if he is playing in Canada.

(2) Brobeck, Phleger, and Harrison, a San Francisco law firm, with Jon Edwards as the lawyer who deals personally with Ismail.

(3) Morcom Sports Enterprises in Oakland. Abram, the president, was selected from among 10 prospective agents to fill the role as Ismail's chief negotiator on football contracts. He and Edwards were the two principals who hammered out that now-famous deal with McNall. “A lot of different numbers have been thrown around in the media,” says Abram, “but let me tell you the real thing. If he stays the full four years in Toronto—and he has every intention of doing so—he will make \$18.2 million, guaranteed, and that's not counting incentives. To be frank, if he even fulfills the minimum incentives in those four years, the deal could be worth \$34 million. Maybe more.”

(4) Heygood Images, which is essentially a public relations firm headed by Ralph Wiley, the former TV commentator and sports feature writer.

That's a lot of people and a lot of pressure, and it doesn't even include McNall, the noted owner of both the Argonauts and the Los Angeles Kings of the National Hockey League. However, Rocket doesn't seem to mind. “Hey, remember, I played three years at Notre Dame,” he says. “I learned how to deal with pressure. I can still remember being a freshman and looking around at all those high school All-Americans I had read about. Man, you talk about pressure. I didn't know I was going to fit in. Then, as things progressed, I had to learn not only how to deal with people who loved Notre Dame, but people who hated it, too—and let me tell you, there are more than you'd ever imagine. That's the way Notre Dame is, I guess. You either love 'em or hate 'em. And along the way, I've met many, many, many who hate 'em.”

It's a funny thing about Rocket's career, though. At the end, he became as popular for what he *almost* achieved as he was for what he actually accomplished. Sure, he





**With Ismail as the centerpiece of its attack, Notre Dame hoisted the helmets after a lot of games.**

finished with some 4,187 all-purpose yards and umpteen scintillating runbacks for touchdowns—most of which were replayed time and again on every network and cable TV show in existence—but his now-you-have-it, now-you-don't 91-yard punt return for an apparent touchdown against Colorado in the final minutes of last season's Orange Bowl is what people remember most. And the fact he *didn't* win the Heisman Trophy, finishing second to Brigham Young quarterback Ty Detmer, seems to have endeared him even more to his adoring public.

**F**OR A FEW BRIEF SECONDS, "The Run" appeared to have been the perfect cap to his fairy tale career: On the final time he touches the ball as a collegian, he goes 91 yards with a punt and scores the touchdown that knocks Colorado out of the national championship. How fitting? No, how disappointing. The play was called back when one of his teammates was caught clipping, and Notre Dame's upset disintegrated.

"Everywhere I go, people still want to talk about that play," Ismail says. "You know what I remember about it? I remember thinking they're going to kick the ball out of the endzone. I remember coach [Lou] Holtz and some of the assistants screaming at me not to fair catch the ball. I remember giving them the thumbs-up sign and saying, 'OK,

OK, chill out.' Next thing I know, I've got the ball, and I remember thinking, 'Don't go down.' I bounce outside, and I'm thinking, 'Wait a minute. I'm about to score here.' Then I'm in the endzone and Ricky Watters is all over me, laughing and shouting, 'You're the greatest . . . you're the greatest . . . ' Then I hear this voice over the loudspeaker [*Rocket makes an echolike sound with his voice*]: 'There is a penalty on the play. There is a penalty on the play.' And Ricky, he goes, 'Noooooooooooooo!' Then I remember thinking to myself, 'Oh, well. I just hope they don't kick it to me again, because I'm out of gas, man.'

"You know what's weird about that run, though? People are always coming up to me and saying how bad they feel about it being called back. They're, like, all sympathetic to me and everything. It's amazing. Same thing with the Heisman. I honestly didn't expect to win it, but people are always coming up to me and saying, 'Man, you got robbed.' My God, I never realized losing something can make people like you more. It's like they love the underdog or something, you know?"

Yeah, but the real question is, will they still love Rocket in four years, or however many years he decides to play in Canada before coming back to try his luck in the NFL? The rumors, of course, are that the Los Angeles Raiders' Al Davis, who drafted Ismail in the fourth round, already has

struck some kind of clandestine deal with McNall, arranging for Rocket to play only a year or two in Toronto before he arrives in L.A. and becomes pro football's version of Magic Johnson.

"All that stuff is still down the road," says Ismail. "If it happens, fine, but it doesn't have to. If people don't believe I plan to play four years in Canada, I can't help it. There is nothing I can do about the rumors. We'll just have to wait and see." In the meantime, Rocket is already revving his engines, anxiously awaiting his first opportunity to streak away from tacklers in Toronto's plush Skydome.

"They've got artificial turf, the kind of stuff we played on in high school," he says. "And let me tell you: Nobody could keep up with us on that surface. Nobody. Yeah, you can run a lot faster on turf, that's for sure. A lot faster."

A lot faster than the Rocket we saw zip by everyone for three seasons at Notre Dame? That's hard to believe—but then, so is the prospect of four vacant years of American television without an opportunity to watch the most exciting young football player of our time. ■

*California writer STEVE BISHEFF, who also serves as head of "Team Bisheff," denies reports that he's bolting for Canada to cover the NHL for \$5.6 million.*





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By GREG GARBER

FIVE YEARS AGO THE NEW YORK Giants won Super Bowl XXI with an offensive line that averaged barely 270 pounds a man. The blocking was intricately choreographed, allowing diminutive half-back Joe Morris to slash off-tackle for big yards. After their 1987 attempt to repeat went down in flames, though, the Giants surveyed the National Football League landscape, read their history books, and decided they had to get bigger and more boring.

They drafted a handful of hulking offensive linemen, reined in quarterback Phil Simms, and gave the ball to burly Ottis Anderson. With straight-ahead, in-your-face blocking from a line now averaging 290 pounds, the painfully conservative Giants reached Super Bowl XXV. They met the Buffalo Bills, who had led the league in scoring and blinded the Dolphins and Raiders with 95 points in two playoff games.

The Giants, as you may recall, won. The obvious conclusion: Boring is better.

Apparently, the rest of the league has started to take notes. Last year's trendy offense, the run-and-shoot, will still have practitioners in Houston, Atlanta, and Detroit, but this season's trend is the Giants' ball-control style of play.

"Hey, we got a lot of flak for it, but there are a lot of teams looking at what we did," says the Giants' Ron Erhardt, the offensive coordinator for both Super Bowl teams. "It's efficient, even though it's not always great to watch.

"The run-and-shoot? It's kind of helter-skelter. A lot of things can go wrong in a hurry. We have fewer moving parts. It's like a golf swing: When it's simpler, a lot less can go wrong."

Buffalo general manager Bill Polian agrees. "We've always believed in ball control: running the ball and stopping the run," he says. "If you look back on the Super Bowl, you might say we got away from that a little. If you put [coach] Marv Levy up against the wall at 2 a.m. and asked him if he wished we

# BORING IS BETTER

*Bye-bye, run-and-shoot. The Giants' plodding ball-control attack—epitomized by Rodney Hampton [above]—is this season's trendy offense*



had run the ball more in the Super Bowl, I think he'd say yes. We're going to emphasize the basics a little more this year."

Carl Peterson, Kansas City's general manager, has built the Chiefs into a classic bruising ball-control team. "You win it up front," he says. "After the Giants' win in the Super Bowl, you'll see people tightening it up a little on both sides of the ball. Remember, we're in a field where we plagiarize everything."

It happened with the Chicago Bears' 46 defense, and it's happening again. For beginners, though, controlling the ball is not quite as simple as running the football with numbing predictability. There are three basic elements:

(1) Minimizing mistakes. The Giants turned the ball over only 15 times in 19 games, a record that may never be equaled. If they had lost the ball once in either the 15-13 NFC Championship Game victory over San Francisco or the 20-19 Super Bowl victory over Buffalo, the Giants probably would have lost. Of the 11 teams with the best giveaway/takeaway ratios during the 1990 regular season, eight made the playoffs.

(2) Stopping the run. Contrary to popular opinion, taking care of business on this side of the ball is more important than a successful running game. The seven teams with the best time of possession figures last season all made the playoffs and had run defenses ranked among the top 12. Philadelphia, San Francisco, and the Giants were first, second, and fourth, respectively.

(3) Controlling the ball. Once the defense forces a turnover or a punt, the offense must be able to run the clock. In the Giants' case, this kept the ball out of potentially dangerous hands. The 49ers and Montana, for instance, were on offense for only 21:01. Jim Kelly and the Bills had only 19:27 to work with. As Giants general manager George Young says: "It still comes down to those third-and-one situations and who's stronger. There are always going to be those six crucial plays in a game. If you make four of them, offensively and defensively, you'll win. It's always been that way."

Smash-mouth football is as old as the game itself. "Defense and a running game won when Amos Alonzo Stagg was playing, and it still wins," Polian says. "People like to talk about offense, but how many have we seen over the years? The wishbone, the single-wing, the shotgun, the wing-T, the run-and-shoot?"

Remember the Miami Dolphins of the early 1970s? They won back-to-back Super Bowls with the lumbering Larry Csonka carrying the ball. John Riggins and the Washington Redskins offensive line, "The

Hogs," dominated Super Bowl XVII. The 49ers won four Super Bowls in nine seasons with a ball-control game based on short passes. All three teams concentrated on turnovers and a rough-and-tumble defense.

"That's exactly right," says 49ers general manager John McVay, "but not everybody sees us that way. I don't know where the finesse stuff started, but it's a misnomer. This football team is loaded with strong, hard-nosed players. Sure, we use the pass more, but we're trying to achieve the same thing. We want to control the game."

This kind of football wins in the playoffs. It's like the NBA, where high-flying offenses congeal into rugged half-court affairs in the postseason. Is it a coincidence that teams that play in domes have never won the Super Bowl? Houston was the only run-and-shoot team to make the playoffs last season, and the Oilers were dispatched handily in the first round by Cincinnati in rainy, 36-degree weather. Is it a coincidence that the Chicago Bears excel in blustery Soldier Field, where their playoff games might as well be played on ice? The same is true of RFK Stadium in Washington and in the wind tunnel called Giants Stadium, as well.

Former Giants coach Bill Parcells, who played linebacker in college, always believed in defense. He also was influenced by Al Davis' Raiders, who traditionally have had offensive linemen as big as boxcars. Throw in the rugged nature of the NFC East and the winter gusts at the Meadowlands, and you have a very conservative game plan. Wide receivers are almost an afterthought.

Before the 1990 season Parcells and Erhardt decided to reel in the offense. The pass routes and Simms' drops in the pocket were shortened substantially. Early in his career Simms was all the offense the Giants had, but with a bigger line and a suffocating defense there was less pressure to win it all with one long throw. Erhardt convinced Simms to go against his competitive nature and throw the ball away instead of throwing an interception or taking a sack. "We can stuff them on defense," Parcells would tell Erhardt before many games. "Let's not give

them anything cheap. Let's not put any gas in their tank."

After Simms injured his foot, Jeff Hostetler stepped in and added a new wrinkle: mobility. Still, his basic job was to hand off the ball and make critical third-down plays. Against Buffalo and San Francisco Hostetler converted 15 of 31 third downs. At the same time, the defense limited the 49ers and Bills to a combined 2-for-16.

In many ways, the key drive in the Super Bowl was the Giants' opening possession of the second half. Hostetler salvaged three third downs with passes, and Anderson carried five times, usually behind 307-pound left tackle Jumbo Elliott. Anderson, 33 years old, finished it off with a one-yard touchdown run. The drive covered 75 yards in 14 plays and consumed nine minutes and 29 seconds, and it underlined the Giants' will to win along the line of scrimmage.

The Giants don't have an exclusive license on the winning-ugly style. Don't look now, but the delicate, wimpy AFC West has



**Nobody, but nobody, could run on the Niners.**

bulked up and swiftly risen to power. Peterson thinks it's the toughest division in football, which is what they used to say about the NFC East.

There was a time when the Denver Broncos dominated the division. Their game was based on quickness and brains, but the weakness of that approach was



revealed in three one-sided Super Bowls. Now, consider the Raiders, a bruising team on both sides of the ball—only the Giants, Buffalo, and Kansas City had fewer turnovers—and the Chiefs, who gave up the ball just 19 times and whose savage defense forced 45 turnovers, tied with Chicago for the league's best total. That added up to the NFL's best net turnover mark (plus-26) by far. Peterson learned about ball control from Dick Vermeil when the two coached together in Philadelphia.

"Dick had a stat: 90% of the teams that rush 40 times win the game," Peterson says. "I believe it, and so does [Chiefs coach] Marty Schottenheimer. At Cleveland he had the big backs, [Kevin] Mack and [Earnest] Byner. If you want to accentuate the running game, you have to be 300 pounds at the tackles. Be big at the point of attack, then get a little movement and the big backs like Christian Okoye [260 pounds] and Barry Word [225 pounds], who can slam it up in there for four, five yards."

San Diego general manager Bobby Beathard, who came from the Redskins, believes in ball control. That's fortunate because he didn't have the tools to do much of anything else last year. "We had a young quarterback, some inexperienced wide receivers, and that big running back [248-pound Marion Butts]," Beathard says. "It was by design, but really we didn't have a lot of options. The passing game wasn't far enough along, and the defense couldn't shut down the run."

Believe it or not, the Chargers had the league's fifth-ranked defense a year ago—and it should get better. They selected cornerback Stanley Richard in the first round and added 300-pound defensive tackle George Thornton in the second.

The Philadelphia Eagles paid dearly to trade up for Tennessee's offensive tackle Antone Davis. Philadelphia has one of the best young quarterbacks in the game in Randall Cunningham and a crew of emerging wideouts, but a weak offensive line has helped knock the Eagles out of the first round of the playoffs three straight years.

The Giants kept pace. They drafted Michigan fullback Jarrod Bunch with their first-round pick. Bunch, who goes around 250 pounds, will eventually block for Rodney Hampton and carry the ball in short yardage situations. Bart Oates, the only holdover starter from the 1986 offensive line, may soon give way to Brian Williams, the 1989 first-rounder, at center. That would give the Giants another 30 pounds up front to help push the pile. It's a cautious approach, but it works.

In the NFL, it seems, you just can't be too careful.

## Just call him Vanilla Ice

Kansas City coach Marty Schottenheimer's top five off-day activities:

5. Hanging around Opti-World, waiting for the two-for-one eyeglass special.
4. Watching film.
3. Buying film.
2. Watching people buying film.
1. Throwing darts at his John Elway poster.—GLENN SHEELEY ■



"Dick Vermeil tired of this?"

## And this time, don't forget—Georgia is east of Texas

The new-look NFL won't happen until 1994, but it will happen.

When Commissioner Paul Tagliabue and the league's expansion committee decided to put off expansion one year, from 1993 to '94, one of the main factors was the NFL's contractual limitations regarding expansion. The league's deals with the television networks require that the present divisional lineups remain through the lives of the contracts, which expire in 1993. One of the key elements in expansion will be realignment, so everything must wait until '94.

Tagliabue has made it clear he wants a more sensible geographical lineup that will promote rivalries. He finds it absurd that the

alignment, of course. For argument's sake—and you will get plenty of arguing on this point—let's give the new franchises to

### 1994: The New-Look AFC

| East        | Central      | West          |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| Buffalo     | Chicago      | L.A. Raiders  |
| Cincinnati  | Detroit      | L.A. Rams     |
| Cleveland   | Green Bay    | Phoenix       |
| New England | Indianapolis | San Diego     |
| Pittsburgh  | Minnesota    | San Francisco |

### 1994: The New-Look NFC

| East         | Central     | West        |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Baltimore    | Atlanta     | Dallas      |
| N.Y. Giants  | Denver      | Houston     |
| N.Y. Jets    | Miami       | Kansas City |
| Philadelphia | New Orleans | St. Louis   |
| Washington   | Tampa Bay   | Seattle     |

present alignment includes Atlanta and New Orleans in the NFC West and Dallas and Phoenix in the NFC East.

"It makes sense to have Miami and Tampa, for example, with teams in the same division, playing each year," he says. "It makes sense for the New York teams, the Los Angeles teams, the Texas teams."

It also makes more sense for the league's coffers. NBC currently is paying \$752 million for its four-year portion of the overall TV deal, compared to \$1.06 billion for CBS. The difference: CBS has more major markets, particularly Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, and Detroit. The NFL will take that into heavy consideration when it realigns. That disparity will be taken care of, eliminating the chance of an ugly bidding war between the networks for NFC rights in 1994. The NFL fears this bidding war because it may cost the league its presence on all three major networks.

The choice of expansion cities will affect

Baltimore and St. Louis, which lost teams when the Colts and Cardinals moved away. Both cities have plans for new stadiums. Other front-runners include Charlotte, N.C.; Oakland, which also lost a team, the Raiders; Jacksonville, Fla.; Birmingham, Ala.; and Memphis. For now, let's stick with Baltimore and St. Louis.

Just how will the new NFC and AFC look? Our speculative lineup has only one geographical glitch, placing Denver in the NFC Central. It takes the New York market away from the AFC network but gives it both Los Angeles teams, San Francisco, Chicago, and Detroit. With this setup, the NFL and television will need to figure out schedules that won't place the Jets and Giants on the



The Battle of New Jersey could be fought two times each year.

air at the same time. The same goes for the Raiders and Rams. Blackout and double-header rules will need changing, too. Still, it's better than anything else the NFL has tried.

Try this, Tags.—BARRY WILNER ■



## Next, the league plans to mount a microphone on William Perry's fork

So you want to get right in on the action? You want to be the quarterback and feel what it's like to have a blitzing linebacker bearing down on you? Or you want to be inside that linebacker's head as he storms in for a sack?

Thanks to USA Network, the World League of American Football, ABC Sports director Craig Janoff, and a tiny camera, viewers could do exactly that last spring. Now the National Football League is toying with the idea of getting its telecasters to use this new technology. In the near future, Bruce Smith, Dan Marino, or Derrick Thomas might have a miniature camera inside his helmet for a game.

"Obviously, it has been very popular and very interesting," says NFL spokesman Greg Aiello. "We may give it a shot. Commissioner [Paul] Tagliabue has said that if any of our networks are interested in using it, we would like to talk to them about it. The initiative would have to come from one of the five networks we are working with." Tagliabue is all for using "Helmet-Cam" on some preseason telecasts to get a feel for how effective it would be as a viewing tool in NFL games. "The commissioner has mentioned we are looking at several things the WLAF is doing and seeing how maybe we can incorporate [them] into our operation," Aiello says.

Another innovation from the NFL-sponsored WLAF could make its way into NFL games: radio helmets that allow the coaching staff to talk directly to the quarterback. That, however, comes under the category of competition and so would involve further investigation by the established league.



**Helmet-Cam could make football the ultimate spectator sport.**

The WLAF has been thrilled by the response to Helmet-Cam from the outset. When Orlando Thunder quarterback Kerwin Bell was sacked in the season opener, viewers saw just what Bell was seeing: the tackler coming and making the hit. They also saw the sky as Bell fell flat on his back. In another game, with the helmet camera inside a nose tackle's gear, viewers were in on the sack. "It's riveting," says WLAF president Mike Lynn. "It's a bird's-eye view of what the players are seeing, from the beginning of the play to the end."

The technology for the camera, which is about the size of a ChapStick tube, has been around for several years. There simply wasn't an outlet to use it. When the WLAF came along, seeking a place in the public's sporting eye, what could be better than

to put the public behind the eyes of the players?

Janoff and Ken Wolff, the producer for ABC's "Monday Night Football," signed on to develop USA Network's coverage of the new league. "We wanted to be as innovative and entertaining as we possibly could be," Janoff says, "so we miked the coaches, and we used Helmet-Cam and the radio helmets. It was the perfect opportunity to give the fans a new perspective."

Helmet-Cam, which costs between \$50,000 and \$75,000 per system, generally has been used as a replay device. Occasionally, when a play has been called that will focus on the player wearing the helmet-mounted camera, it might be used live.

Either way, it's been a real treat for the armchair quarterback.—B.W.

## Maybe you should rent an apartment—and be ready to break the lease

*How does Don Shula do it? Chuck Noll, too?*

Year after year, these two survive the rigors of coaching in the NFL, with all its inherent paranoia. Oh, sure, even Shula and Noll have been on the coaching hot seat. As recently as three years ago, people were wondering if the game had passed them by. They answered by rebuilding, and now a division title or even a Super Bowl spot is not a ridiculous aim for either one.

Maybe these five coaches ought to call Don and Chuck for advice:

### 1. Jerry Burns, Vikings.

Minnesota's embarrassing plunge from division champion to last place was bad



**Burns: Purple haze in the dome.**

enough, but the team's public image is a lot more damaging. The Vikings are perceived as a super talented bunch of underachievers.

They are looked upon as chokers. They are plagued by off-field problems.

Burns seems to be in over his head. He hasn't inspired this group, which should be among the best in the league. His choices of assistants have not been particularly successful. His strategies often have been woeful, particularly the sheer waste of Herschel Walker's skills. For Burns to hang on, the Vikings must win the NFC Central. To do that, they need a better coach. It's a Catch-22 that could lead to a .500 season and Burns' ouster.

### 2. Dan Reeves, Broncos.

The man who guided Denver to three AFC titles in four seasons called 1990 "the worst year of my life." His health suffered as his team plunged to the bottom of the AFC West. By season's end, Reeves was ques-



tioning a great many things, not the least of which was his own desire to stick with coaching. He decided to hang in, but another poor year might be all Reeves can take. The Broncos are capable of almost anything, as they have been throughout his roller-coaster coaching career.

### 3. Jerry Glanville, Falcons.

OK, Jerry, your road show had a weak opening, but it was entertaining. Now you have to put together a stronger script, and the endings certainly must be happier.

Another big-time losing record won't get Glanville fired after two years in Atlanta, but his mouth and his outrageous behavior

might. The Falcons have the unenviable task of trying to climb the ladder in the tough NFC West. Even if they are a lot better than in 1990, they could go 0-6 within the division.

Glanville must curb some of the antics of his players, shenanigans that incite the opposition. For that matter, he has to curb some of his own antics.

### 4. Jimmy Johnson, Cowboys.

The guy has done a magnificent job in making the Cowboys respectable again. They probably would have made the playoffs if Troy Aikman hadn't been hurt in Game 15.

Now, with all those draft choices and all

the well-deserved positive notices JJ has received, it's time for Dallas to leap higher. If America's Team Redux isn't in the playoffs, Johnson's work will begin to be criticized.

### 5. Marv Levy, Bills.

What? How can Levy be feeling the heat. Simple.

What team has the most talent in the entire league? The Bills. What team will be favored to win the Super Bowl this season? Right again: the Bills. What will be acceptable to the folks in Buffalo and the players on the team? Nothing short of an NFL title.

OK, then, who has more pressure on him than Levy?—B.W.

## Anyone who flunks has to explain to Georgia Frontiere why last season was a good learning experience

### 1. Buddy Ryan doesn't have a job for the '91 season because:

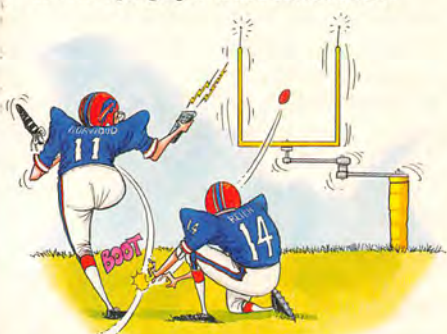
- His NBC audition tape won first prize on "America's Funniest Home Videos."
- Randall Cunningham ran a very successful bad recommendation campaign.
- The Philly papers don't need any more guys to work the rim.
- Jimmy Johnson put out a bounty on him.

### 2. The World League of American Football's "Helmet-Cam" came about because:

- "Shoulderpad-Cam" was dropped because of bad lighting.
- David Letterman is the executive producer of WLAF telecasts.
- Tex Schramm's last words were, "This league's not big enough for that thing and me."
- We're not quite ready for "Training Room-Cam."

### 3. After missing the winning field goal in Super Bowl XXV, Buffalo's Scott Norwood spent his offseason:

- Working on an adjustable goal post that can be remote-controlled by the kicker.
- Sweeping up in Bill Polian's office.



Norwood's near-miss has led to an innovative idea for kickers.



Herschel now feels right at home during winters in Minnesota.

- Getting Gatorade thrown on him by the New York Giants.
- Completing Wide-Right Rehab at Roy Gerela Memorial Hospital.

### 4. Ex-Seattle Seahawks linebacker Brian Bosworth's second movie will detail his pro career and be called:

- "Hot Damn, I Made a Tackle."
- "Honey, I Shrunk the Boz."
- "A Tackle, Sooner or Later."
- "Bozbo."

### 5. The New England Patriots have guaranteed no repeat of the Lisa Olson incident by demanding that:

- Zeke Mowatt shower in his uniform.
- Victor Kiam's comments be limited to sign language.
- All references to a purebred female dog as "a classic bitch" be outlawed.
- A seven-day waiting period be placed on purchase of Lady Remington shavers.

### 6. The San Francisco 49ers didn't go to the Super Bowl in 1990 because:

- Jerry Rice had a conflict that day with a guest shot on "Arsenio."
- Bubba Paris ate all the playbooks.
- Joe Montana mistakenly hit the emergency button on his Catapult L.A. Gears in the NFC title game and flew out of Candlestick Park.

- The NFL decided they were boring.

### 7. With Deion Sanders and Tim McKyer in the Atlanta Falcons' secondary, the team plans to call them:

- "Heckel and Jeckel."
- "The Bose Brothers."
- "Woofers and Tweeters."
- With a bullhorn, just to be heard above the chatter.

### 8. This season Herschel Walker will endorse:

- The You-Hardly-Know-Your-Engine's-On Midas muffler.
- The Herschel Walker Land of 10,000 Lakes Pocket Ice Fisherman.
- Bobsled grease.
- DUI insurance for his teammates.

### 9. Mike Ditka has decided to remain in coaching because:

- He can't get a decent tee time if he becomes a normal person.
- Dan Hampton told him that coaches who take broadcasting jobs are wimps.
- He thinks this is the year The Fridge can lose that baby fat.
- It would kill him to be out of the league at the same time Buddy Ryan is.

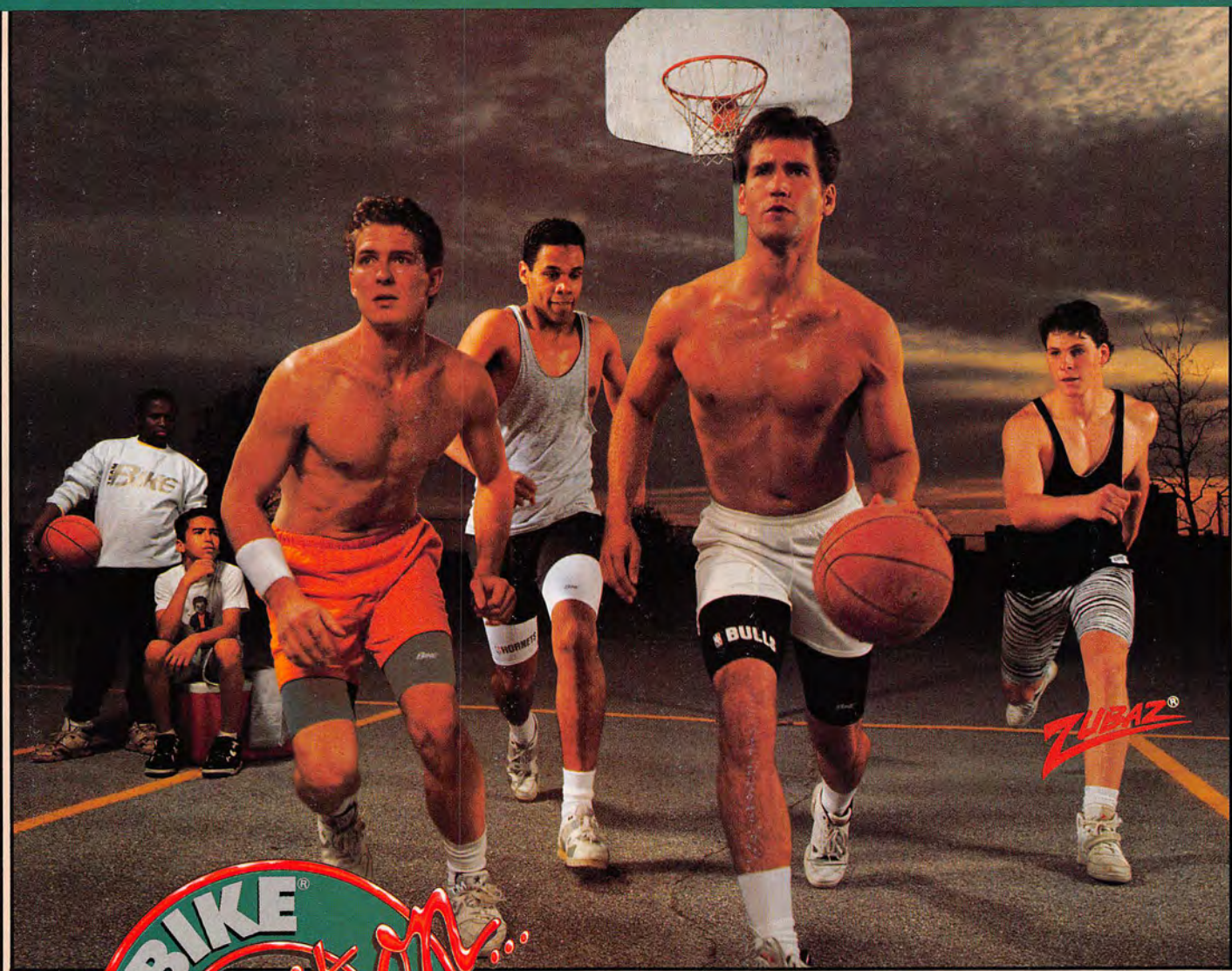
### 10. NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue's mission for the 1991 season is to:

- Give Clarence Kay at least eight more second chances.
- Find two expansion cities that celebrate the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.
- Put the finishing touches on his Sam Wyche voodoo doll.
- Lose that green sport coat.—G.S.



'...and this is for the locker room lockout...'





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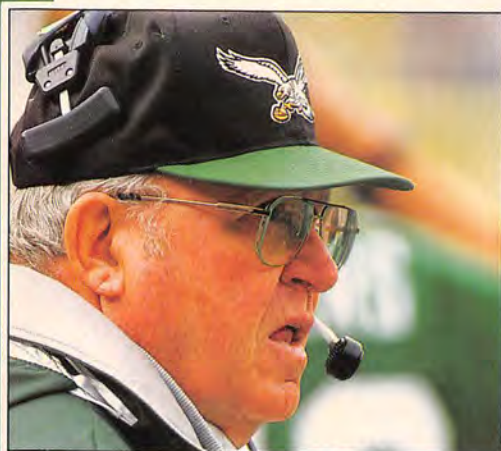






## Don't let the door hit you in the butt on your way out

After five seasons of speaking his sometimes bizarre mind in Philadelphia, coach Buddy Ryan was finally shown the gate, even though he made the playoffs for three straight seasons. Ray Perkins failed to make the playoffs even once in his four seasons in Tampa Bay and was asked to leave before the 1990 season ended. Bud Carson never had a chance in Cleveland, even though he reached the AFC Championship Game as a rookie in 1989. Rod Rust presided over a 1-15 disaster



**Ryan's mouth buried his record.**

last season at New England and joined the ranks of the terminated coaches.

Bill Parcells surprised many people when he stepped away from the Giants in May, a week before the team's minicamp. He went willingly, but he raised the total of head coaching changes between the 1990 and 1991 seasons to five.

A busy year, right? Not exactly. In fact, the turnover was a little less than the average coaching turnover for the last 20 seasons. "Yes," says Bill Belichick, who took over for Carson in Cleveland. "That sounds about right."

Since 1971 there have been 159 head coaches in the league. The Colts, for instance, have had 10 different head coaches, while Houston and New Orleans have had nine. Washington, New England, Philadelphia, and Atlanta have all had eight. Even San Francisco, a paragon of continuity in recent years, has gone through seven coaches in that time. While the average player lasts close to four seasons, the 28 head coaches for 1991 bring only one more year of experience with their present teams to the table, and that includes monuments such as Chuck Noll (22 seasons) and Don Shula (21).—G.G.

## You wouldn't believe how hard it is to wash Gatorade out of your hair

*Top 10 reasons Bill Parcells quit the New York Giants:*

10. Tired of having to go for donuts for George Young.
9. LT told him to.
8. Ruined too many windbreakers due to Gatorade dousings.
7. Offer from Frankfurt Galaxy just too good to pass up.
6. Needs a year to get things ready to take over at Tampa Bay.
5. Hairdo's gotten too cool to be a coach.
4. Taking over for Chuck Woolery on "Love Connection."
3. Things just aren't the same since the *Post* toned down its headlines.
2. Couldn't bear to see Jeff Hostetler beat out Phil Simms in training camp.
1. I'm Bill Parcells, that says it all.—G.S. ■



**The New York sidelines will be calmer and gentler minus Parcells.**

## We need to acquire a punter—our stock just dropped 14 points

Nothing ever stays the same, so why should the hierarchy of NFL owners be any different?

In 1925 Tim Mara purchased the rights to the New York Giants franchise for \$500. The team stayed completely in family hands until after the Giants won Super Bowl XXV last January. During the offseason Tim Mara, grandson of the original Tim, sold his half of the team to Robert Tisch for an estimated \$75 million. Tisch presides over a burgeoning insurance empire.

Wellington Mara, who held on to his half of the team, was sad to see Tim sell out despite the friction that has developed between them over the years. "There's a kind of emptiness," Wellington says. "It has become much more of a business. The prices of franchises are staggering.

"We're moving toward corporate ownership. It's like the corner grocery store when the supermarket chain moves across the street. It's tough to compete. In a free, unfettered marketplace it would be tough for a family-run team to compete with a conglomerate. You know, they say the 49ers can lose \$20 million and it's a writeoff for their next shopping mall."

Mara was referring to San Francisco owner Eddie DeBartolo Jr., who in fact was fined last season for violating the league's rules against corporate ownership. As matters stand, only two pure family-run teams

remain in the league now that the Giants have been split up: the Steelers, run by the Rooney family in Pittsburgh, and the Cardinals under the Bidwill family in Phoenix. Football is the only business they've ever known. Even the McCaskey family in Chicago has sold a piece of the Bears to improve the team's cash flow.

The specter of corporate ownership frightens franchises that don't have deep pockets. The Green Bay Packers, for example, are a publicly owned team and might have difficulty matching dollars with the 49ers. "There's some truth to that," says Giants general manager George Young. "Since there are so few families left, it's inevitable. What the date of that inevitability is, I don't know."

DeBartolo represents the new breed, owners who purchased teams after achieving financial success in other arenas and have sources of revenue other than football. Half of today's owners fall into one of four categories that define where they made most of their money. Call 'em "crude fellows," with profits from oil and gas (Bud Adams, Houston; Lamar Hunt, Kansas City; Jerry Jones, Dallas; and Pat Bowlen, Denver); "high rollers," with automobile fortunes (William Clay Ford, Detroit; Norman Braman, Philadelphia; Tom Benson, New Orleans; and Ken Behring, Seattle); "kings of commerce," or manufacturers (Victor Kiam, New England; Robert Irsay, Indianapolis; and Ralph Wilson, Buffalo); and "land barons," or real estate moguls (DeBartolo and Alex Spanos, San Diego).—G.G. ■



## Admittedly, his cane has cut down on our play-action passing

Football is a young man's game, right? The average player lasts fewer than four seasons amid the mayhem. So what were all those creaking quarterbacks doing last year ripping up the NFL? Check it out: The four top-rated passers—Buffalo's Jim Kelly (101.2), Houston's Warren Moon (96.8), Kansas City's Steve DeBerg (96.3), and Phil Simms of the Giants (92.7)—and San Francisco's Joe Montana, the highest-rated passer in league history, at No. 7, were all at least 30 years old.

DeBerg, at 36, was the biggest surprise. His average rating over 12 previous seasons

"If we asked him to drop back seven steps every play and win the game by throwing deep, it would be tough," says Kansas City GM Carl Peterson. "If you ask him to go back, hand the ball off, do a little play-action, he'll succeed because it's what he does best. Steve has been really helped by the running game."

One of the biggest factors in the passer rating formula is interceptions; in fact, critics say they are weighted too heavily. DeBerg attempted 444 passes and only four

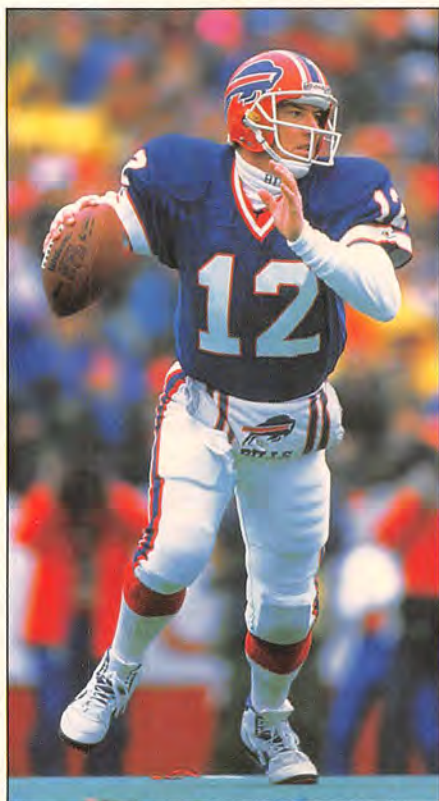


**Moon: Slick for the Oilers.**

### Thirtysomething Quarterbacks

| Quarterback  | Team   | Rating | League Ranking | Age in 1990 |
|--------------|--------|--------|----------------|-------------|
| Jim Kelly    | Bills  | 101.2  | 1              | 30          |
| Warren Moon  | Oilers | 96.8   | 2              | 34          |
| Steve DeBerg | Chiefs | 96.3   | 3              | 36          |
| Phil Simms   | Giants | 92.7   | 4              | 35          |
| Joe Montana  | 49ers  | 89.0   | 7              | 34          |

was 71.0, but in 1990 he was terrific. The key for DeBerg (as with one of the other signal-calling fossils, Simms) was a team that didn't ask too much of him.



**Kelly: You don't need a spring chicken to play in the winter.**

were picked off, good for a miniscule percentage of .9. At the same time, he completed better than 58% of his passes and tossed 23 touchdown passes.

Next in age was Simms, who was 35 in 1990. He exited late in the season with a foot injury, but not before putting up the best numbers of his 12-year career. Simms also threw just four interceptions in the Giants' conservative offense. "You hate to say you're getting older and wiser," Simms says, "but I guess that's what's happened. I know how to avoid the mistakes that used to hurt me."

Moon and Montana were both 34 last season but managed to combine for 59 touchdown passes. Montana's rating wasn't up to 1989's record-breaking mark of 112.4 because he was forced to operate without much of a running game.

"Montana and all those guys are just so smart. If the guy makes it past 30, he's got a lot going for him," says Giants general manager George Young. "Look at Kenny Stabler. His best years were over 30."

Based on this evidence Kelly, who is now 31, appears to have several very good years ahead of him. Last season he completed 63.3% of his passes and threw 24 touchdowns against only nine interceptions. "Two words: wisdom and experience," says Buffalo GM Bill Polian. "In Jim's case, it's that and Thurman Thomas. [Thomas] took a lot of pressure off Jim, which allowed him to have the great, great season."—G.G. ■

## As you might suspect, he's got terrific moves in heavy traffic

Unlike many athletes, Walter Payton never thought his career would last forever. So as a shrewd businessman, he planted the seeds for his life after the National Football League well before he carried the football for the final time. Bud Holmes, who negotiated the former All-Pro's contracts with the Bears, is Payton's business adviser and equal partner. Together, they have built Walter Payton Inc. into something far beyond the normal realm of athletes-turned-businessmen.

Former NFL stars typically become restaurateurs, lend their name to clothing manufacturers, or pursue endorsement opportunities. In some ways Payton is no exception, but he accomplishes his goals with the same special flair he displayed on the football field—and there's no telling how far he'll carry this ball.

Three years ago Payton decided to give auto racing a go—and it came as no surprise that on June 2 at the Dallas Grand Prix, the green flag came down on the newly created NFL "Team 34" (in honor of Payton's jersey number, which has been retired by the Bears), a racing partnership between Payton and NFL Properties Inc., the league's retail licensing arm.

Payton's professional racing experience came courtesy of Paul Newman and Scott Sharp as part of the now-defunct Newman/Sharp racing team. "Sweetness" has competed in both GT 1 and Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) Trans-Am events. Last year was Payton's second full racing season. In seven starts he compiled two victories and a second-place finish and set a track record at Road America in GT1. This year he plans to compete in Sports 2000 Oldsmobile Pro Series as NFL "Team 34." Payton refers to this series as "hot," but his machine should be up to it. The car can produce top speeds of more than 150 mph and weighs only 1,000 pounds. Payton's ultimate goal is to someday race the 24 Hours at LeMans, but for now he's just enjoying the ride.

Payton doesn't try to compare racing with football. "There's no comparison," he says. "I take my racing just as seriously as my football, but I played football for 17 years and I've only been involved with racing for three years. The strategy is the same, though: I don't want to get hit. That's the way to get to the endzone first."

So what's next for Walter Payton, the man with endless energy? Perhaps he'll team up with Herschel Walker on an NFL-sponsored bobsled, just for something to do during the offseason.—GILLIAN ZUCKER ■



## Big names, big bucks—and big disappointments

Pressed to provide some sort of free agency system in the face of lawsuits by the players, the National Football League came

up with Plan B in 1989. Teams protected 37 players and were free to sign those left unprotected on other teams' rosters—and

the feeding frenzy over marginal players was remarkable. In all, 229 of the 619 free agents who were eligible were signed by new teams.

The signing bonuses and lucrative contracts given to Plan B players put pressure on teams to reward their better players in kind. In 1990, 184 of 490 eligible players changed teams in Plan B, which worked out to a higher percentage of movement (37.6% to 37.0%), but in 1991 the ardor cooled. As happened following baseball's frenetic free agency of the 1970s, NFL teams became more selective in their choices. Oh, the Green Bay Packers and the Cleveland Browns signed 13 and 11 players, respectively, but the overall numbers were down. Only 139 of 518 eligible players signed, a percentage of 26.8.

"It's not nirvana, it's not the answer. It's stop-gap," says Giants general manager George Young, a conservative in these matters. "Plan B just forces you to make your roster decisions a year earlier rather than two years later."

Young points out that while signings decreased in 1991, the players worked out by teams (664) remained fairly constant. Most of the better teams are judicious in the choices. The Giants, for instance, have signed only nine players in three years. Nevertheless, they found a gem in 1989 when they signed special teams madman Reyna Thompson, a former Dolphin. Likewise, Kansas City found relentless nose tackle Dan Saleaumua on the Detroit roster in 1989.

The Giants also lost 10 players to Plan B in 1990—and promptly won the Super Bowl. "I'm not sure what that stat means," says new Cleveland coach Bill Belichick, the Giants defensive coordinator from 1983 to '90. "But [the Giants] were pretty aggressive in the market this year, and they really improved themselves at the positions they weren't able to get in the draft."—G.G. ■

### The Plan B All-Unprotected Team

| Pos. | Player          | '90 Team      | Comment  |
|------|-----------------|---------------|--|
| QB   | Mike Tomczak    | Chicago       | 2-1 as playoff starter; signed with Green Bay.         |
| RB   | Roger Craig     | San Francisco | Voted to four Pro Bowls; signed with the Raiders.      |
| RB   | Ottis Anderson  | Giants        | Super Bowl XXV MVP; remained with the Giants.          |
| WR   | Richard Johnson | Detroit       | 64 catches for 727 yards in 1990; signed with Houston. |
| WR   | Cedric Jones    | New England   | 69 catches last two years; signed with Houston.        |
| TE   | Pete Holohan    | Rams          | 49 catches in 1990; signed with Kansas City.           |
| OT   | Joel Patten     | San Diego     | Signed with the Raiders.                               |
| OT   | Mike Graybill   | Phoenix       | Signed with Detroit.                                   |
| OG   | Mark May        | Washington    | One Pro Bowl; signed with San Diego.                   |
| OG   | John Rienstra   | Pittsburgh    | 1986 No. 1 pick; signed with Cleveland.                |
| C    | Dennis McKnight | Detroit       | Signed with Philadelphia.                              |
| DE   | John Bosa       | Miami         | 1987 No. 1 pick; signed with the Jets.                 |
| DT   | Bill Pickel     | Raiders       | 1983 No. 2 pick; signed with the Jets.                 |
| DE   | Robert Banks    | Cleveland     | Signed with Houston.                                   |
| LB   | Alex Gordon     | Raiders       | 1987 No. 2 pick of the Jets; signed with Cincinnati.   |
| LB   | Rick Graf       | Miami         | 1987 No. 2 pick of Miami; signed with Houston.         |
| LB   | Matt Millen     | San Francisco | Two Super Bowl rings; signed with Washington.          |
| LB   | Marcus Cotton   | Cleveland     | 1988 No. 2 pick; signed with Seattle.                  |
| S    | Felix Wright    | Cleveland     | 1989 NFL interception leader; signed with Minnesota.   |
| S    | Ronnie Lott     | San Francisco | Four Super Bowl rings; signed with the Raiders.        |
| CB   | Sammy Lilly     | San Diego     | Signed with the Rams.                                  |
| CB   | Vince Newsome   | Rams          | Signed with Cleveland.                                 |
| KR   | Vai Sikahema    | Phoenix       | Two Pro Bowls; signed with Green Bay.                  |
| PK   | Mike Lansford   | Rams          | 87 points in 1990; signed with Washington.             |
| P    | Brian Hansen    | New England   | 41.7 net average in 1990; signed with Cleveland.       |

## Watch for the Detroit-Pontiac Lions

Top 10 things that will become part of the NFL, thanks to the World League of American Football:

10. Deion Sanders and Tim McKyer to wear "Talktrash-Cam."

9. Cleveland switching to neon brown uniforms.

8. Stan Gelbaugh to do color work on "Monday Night Football."

7. Field goals outside 50 yards to be worth four points.

6. Super Bowl XXIX to be played in Madrid bullring.

5. Sideline interviews with people who can't speak English.

4. Commissioner Paul Tagliabue to wear European-cut suits and quit dressing as if he does his clothes shopping with Al Geiberger.

3. Kerwin Bell to take over for Joe Montana in San Francisco.

2. Wireless mike to be put on Jerry Glanville in hopes of picking up plays called down to the field from Elvis.

1. "Coors-Cam" to be attached to Clarence Kay's sunglasses.—G.S. ■



'Y'all nothing but hound dogs.'



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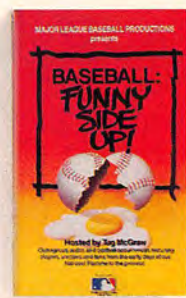
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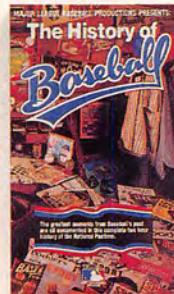
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By MARK BLAUDSCHUN

GENE CORRIGAN WAS HOLDING court in the far corner of the press box at the University of Virginia's Scott Stadium. Corrigan, the affable and very able commissioner of the Atlantic Coast Conference, was reminiscing about his days as the athletic director at Virginia.

"There are more of you here in this press box," said Corrigan, waving his hand at a cluster of reporters from around the country who had made the journey to Charlottesville in early November, "than [there were in] some of the crowds at our games when I was here. Now look at this. Isn't this amazing? Who would have believed it?"

Corrigan was talking about a sellout crowd for the Virginia-Georgia Tech game, but he also was referring to the attention the then-No. 1 ranked Cavaliers were receiving. In a very real sense he was marveling at the rise to prominence of Atlantic Coast Conference football, as well. Virginia did not wind up No. 1 last season, but Georgia Tech did, which gave the ACC its first national champion since Clemson pulled off the magic feat in 1981. Clemson had always been an aberration in the ACC, a football power in a basketball conference. Now, though, in the second season of the 1990s, the ACC has achieved more balance, with Tech, Virginia, and Clemson regarded as top 20 timber.

Under most circumstances that would be enough to satisfy the ACC purists who still think the college sports season doesn't actually begin until the first day of basketball practice on October 15. However, in these days of conference realignment, with allegiances shifting like fault lines in an earthquake zone, the ACC needed more—and led by Corrigan, who came to the ACC from the AD's chair at Notre Dame in 1988, the ACC got more, signing up Florida State as a full member beginning in the 1992 season. Suddenly, the ACC has teeth—and some credibility—as a football power.

Oh, there are still some doubters. For example, when Virginia was roaring through

# THE BOAST OF THE COAST

*Shawn Jones, who led Georgia Tech to an undefeated season, is among the emerging stars as the ACC transforms into a football powerhouse*



the early part of its schedule last year, scoring 50 points a game and crushing every opponent in its climb to No. 1, skeptics among the media refused to believe that any ACC team other than Clemson was any good. Even when Georgia Tech finished as the only unbeaten team in Division I-A last year and earned a first-place ranking by one vote in the United Press International coaches poll, some critics refused to give the ACC credit.

However, almost everyone thinks that will change with the arrival of Florida State. No one doubts the Seminoles' credentials. "We just felt if we were going to expand, and we were in no hurry, that we should do it with some careful consideration about how we went about it and what kind of school was involved," says Corrigan. "Florida State was a perfect fit, athletically, academically, and geographically."

It was not an easy fit, however. The ACC was quite content to stay with eight members who split the highly profitable bounty from the conference basketball tournament. It was reluctant to cut another slice of the pie. Those hesitations faded when the pie started to grow, especially when the ACC shifted the site of the basketball tournament to the spacious 23,901-seat Charlotte Coliseum. That eased some of the concerns about tickets, but if the ACC was going to expand beyond a regional basis it had to do so by using football, not basketball.

The first step was taken in 1988 when the ACC agreed to put its champion in the Florida Citrus Bowl, which had moved to a January 1 date in 1987. The Citrus isn't one of the big boys—Rose, Cotton, Sugar, and Orange definitely outrank it—but the agreement marked the beginning of the maturation process for the league.

That the ACC was a tightknit group of schools was not surprising. Formed in May 1953 of seven members that seceded from the Southern Conference, the ACC was more like a neighborhood association than a league. Clemson, Duke, Maryland, North Carolina, North Carolina State, South Carolina, and Wake Forest formed the core group; Virginia was added six months later, and the family remained intact until 1971, when South Carolina withdrew. The void remained until 1973, when Georgia Tech pulled out of the Southeastern Conference.

No one was looking for expansion until it became the operative word of 1990, when conference

realignment started taking place in the SEC and Big Ten. When first asked about realignment last summer in reference to the ACC, Corrigan said any speculation would be "a bit premature." Nevertheless, Corrigan, who had given up the rigors of life as an athletic director to be conference commissioner in the part of the country where he grew up, knew change was inevitable.

However, where to go? South into Florida? Back to South Carolina? Moving to Florida made more sense when Florida State was discussed. Not only was the fit with the Seminoles right athletically and academically, but it also gave the ACC a recruiting foothold in Florida.

"Before," says Clemson coach Ken Hatfield, "it was primarily Clemson and the next level when you talked about major football powers, but all of that has changed. Georgia Tech and Virginia were ranked No. 1 last year. North Carolina has had a few good years. Now we have Florida State. I think we're definitely going to be the football conference of the '90s."

The ACC still has some catching up to do. Hatfield, who played and coached in the Southwest Conference and has recruited throughout the South for years, concedes that the ACC was a second-rate football power at one time. "It was before Proposition 48 evened things out academically," he says. "The ACC would have entrance requirements that were 50 to 100 points above the other leagues. During that time the ACC lost a lot of good players."



**Georgia Tech and Clemson have helped the ACC earn respect on the gridiron.**

When Proposition 48—which requires all incoming scholarship athletes to have a minimum of 700 on their Scholastic Aptitude Tests—was voted in at the NCAA convention a few years back, the balance shifted. The days when going to the SEC or SWC was an automatic good deal for athletes who wanted to play and play right away were gone. The ACC maintained its level of academic integrity and started getting a bigger share of the student-athletes, too. "It's then that you started to see the rise of the ACC," says Hatfield.

With the surge of academic reforms sweeping the NCAA, the ACC became an attractive league for outsiders. South Carolina thought about coming back. Miami knocked on the door. And so did Florida State. FSU had the edge because it already had strong links to the ACC. "Much of our alumni base lives in the ACC area," says Florida State athletic director Bob Goin, who had his choice of the Big East and the Southeastern Conference before the FSU board of regents decided to join the ACC.

Florida State is clearly the crown jewel of the age of expansion that has swept college football in the past few years, eclipsing even the prestige that Penn State brought to the Big Ten. Under Bobby Bowden, the Seminoles have turned into a megapower, finishing in the top four in the country the last four years. Florida State and Clemson are the only teams in the country to have won their last five bowl games.

If in the 1990s it's not what you do but who sees you do it that matters, the ACC is in good shape. With Florida State, the conference now comprises six states with a population base of 40 million people and has a chance to expose 14 million people in the state of Florida to daily media coverage of its athletic programs. More coverage and more exposure means more athletes will know about ACC athletics. People such as Hatfield, who moved to Clemson from Arkansas two years ago, start laughing when they see a talent pool as deep as Florida's become more available. Add the exposure that a four-bowl agreement involving the ACC champion, the Big East champion, and Notre Dame with bowls such as the Cotton, Sugar, and Orange can bring, and it's not difficult to see why the ACC appears to have moved to the next level in terms of overall prestige.

Using Clemson and Florida State as cornerstones and adding Georgia Tech, Virginia, and North Carolina into the mix gives the ACC as solid a foundation as any league. The competitive balance that exists in basketball may not be there yet, but ACC football no longer needs to be hidden in a closet after mid-October.



## Hey, nobody can move on New Year's Day anyway, so sit back and enjoy

*Rating the bowls (payout per team for last season listed in parentheses):*

**Orange (\$4.1 million):** This has everything you'd want in a bowl and more, even if the halftime show does last slightly longer than the Thirty Years' War: weather (mostly balmy), financial rewards (only the Rose pays more green), and the potential for suspense (it's last on the New Year's Day agenda). Certainly, no bowl has been more prominent in recent years: The Orange has produced six of the last 10 national champions.

**Rose (\$6 million):** In terms of pageantry, tradition, and financial reward, the granddaddy of them all has no peer. Even so, the Rose Bowl has suffered from something of a New Year's Day hangover in recent years, what with the all too frequent lame efforts by the Big Ten entry. The soon-to-be Big Eleven hasn't produced a national champion since Woody Hayes' Buckeyes of 1968, which may be the best argument yet against long-term marriages of bowls and conferences.

**Sugar (\$3.2 million):** With no national champion to call its own since 1982, the



**The Orange left its brother bowls feeling green with envy last season.**

Sugar Bowl hasn't always been what it's cracked up to be. Still, there's a lot to like about it, most of all the annual Southeastern Conference representative that brings smash-mouth passion to the Bayou bash.

**Blockbuster (\$1.65 million):** The country needs another bowl like Oklahoma needs a rules infraction, but if its debut at jam-packed Joe Robbie Stadium was any indication, Bowl No. 19 is a natural. What's more, the Blockbuster could find its niche in the bowl glut if a hoped-for move to New Year's Eve can be worked out.

**Holiday (\$1.2 million):** What can you

say about a game in which even Penn State lights up the scoreboard for 50 big ones? Pure and simple, no bowl has more punch. The Holiday Bowl certainly hasn't lacked imagination in the way of frantic finishes. As long as the point-happy Western Athletic Conference continues to get an annual invitation, expect defenses to take a holiday in the Holiday.

**Cotton (\$3 million):** In desperate need of some long-lost identity, the Cotton would get the most out of a deal that would spread Notre Dame and the ACC and Big East champions among itself, the Orange, and the Sugar. Otherwise, the Cotton Bowl will remain only as good as the University of Texas in any given year. Since the birth of the post-bowl polls, the nation's top-ranked team came out of Big D only when the Longhorns represented the Southwest Conference.

**Citrus (\$1.35 million):** Its future heightened by a 3-1-1 postseason performance and a co-national championship, the Atlantic Coast Conference has positioned itself to double its postseason stakes at the very least. If the Citrus can assure the ACC of major bowl status, then include it among the upwardly mobile for the '90s.

—PAUL LADEWSKI

## A season of Saturdays: Grab the remote control

*The game of the week for every week:*

□ **August 28:** Penn State vs. Georgia Tech (at East Rutherford, N.J.). Grudge Match I: As Maryland boss, Tech coach Bobby Ross came up empty four times in as many meetings with Joe Paterno. **Prediction: Georgia Tech 19, Penn State 17.**

□ **September 7:** BYU at UCLA. Warning to defensive purists: T 'n' T—as in Ty Detmer and Tommy Maddox—in Pasadena. **Prediction: UCLA 35, BYU 31.**

□ **September 12:** Houston at Miami. Will Cougars quarterback David Klingler pass his first Heisman Trophy test? Or will the Canes' wash-and-wear defense turn him into static Klingler? **Prediction: Miami 44, Houston 28.**

□ **September 21:** Washington at Nebraska. A loss here could cost the Mark Brunell-less Cougars a chance at the national crown. **Prediction: Nebraska 24, Washington 20.**

□ **September 28:** Florida State at Michigan. If the Seminoles get through their murderous schedule unscathed, they should be allowed to advance to Super Bowl XXVI. **Prediction: Florida State 24, Michigan 23.**

□ **October 5:** Michigan at Iowa. The run for the roses begins in Iowa City. **Prediction: Michigan 27, Iowa 21.**

□ **October 12:** Oklahoma at Texas. Now that the Sooners are back from probation and the Longhorns are back from the living dead, the border battle takes on renewed meaning. **Prediction: Oklahoma 24, Texas 13.**

□ **October 19:** Dartmouth at Yale. The Big Green's victory over the Elis last year helped them gain a share of the Ivy crown with Cornell and knocked Yale to third place, one game back. **Prediction: Yale 31, Dartmouth 13.**

□ **October 26:** USC at Notre Dame. Since 1982, the last time the Trojans were victorious in this once-competitive series, Lou Holtz has made coaching stops at Arkansas, Minnesota, and Notre Dame. **Prediction: Notre Dame 23, USC 20.**

□ **November 2:** Florida at Auburn. Yep, this is just what Tigers coach Pat Dye needs to calm those nagging tummy troubles: Steve Spurrier's offense, which could upset any opposing coach's stomach. **Prediction: Florida 31, Auburn 17.**

□ **November 9:** Washington at USC.

Grudge Match II: One year ago the Huskies defense limited Todd Marinovich to seven completions for 80 yards in a 31-0 wax job. **Prediction: Washington 17, USC 14.**

□ **November 16:** Notre Dame at Penn State. Grudge Match III: Talk about topsyturvy. When the Nittany Lions stunned the Irish, it marked the fifth time last season that the No. 1 team had fallen. **Prediction: Notre Dame 19, Penn State 11.**

□ **November 23:** Ohio State at Michigan. Super soph running backs Robert Smith (Euclid, Ohio) and Ricky Powers (Akron Buchtei) will renew their high school rivalry in a clash that has decided the Big Ten title no fewer than 19 times. **Prediction: Michigan 28, Ohio State 17.**

□ **November 30:** Florida State at Florida. This friendly get-together will determine once and for all whether the Tampa Bay Buccaneers are the third- or fourth-best team in the state. **Prediction: Florida State 28, Florida 24.**

□ **December 7:** Army vs. Navy (at Philadelphia). OK, so this isn't Blanchard and Davis vs. Staubach, but what other rivalry with this kind of storied past can boast of a dead heat (42-42-7)? **Prediction: Army 6, Navy 6.**—PL

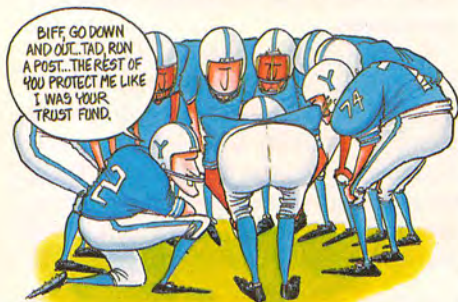


If you insist upon transporting that inflated oblong of porcine pelt across this line, we'll be forced to repel your overture in the strongest possible terms

*Five reasons to like the Ivy League:*

1. **Academia is No. 1 and No. 1a.** If you want college sports in its purest form, then look no further. Even though Ivy League schools recruit student-athletes, football scholarships are nonexistent. Teams play a 10-game schedule—the corner lanes are the closest they get to a bowl outing—and spring practice is limited to one day without pads.

2. **Money is better left to nickel-and-**



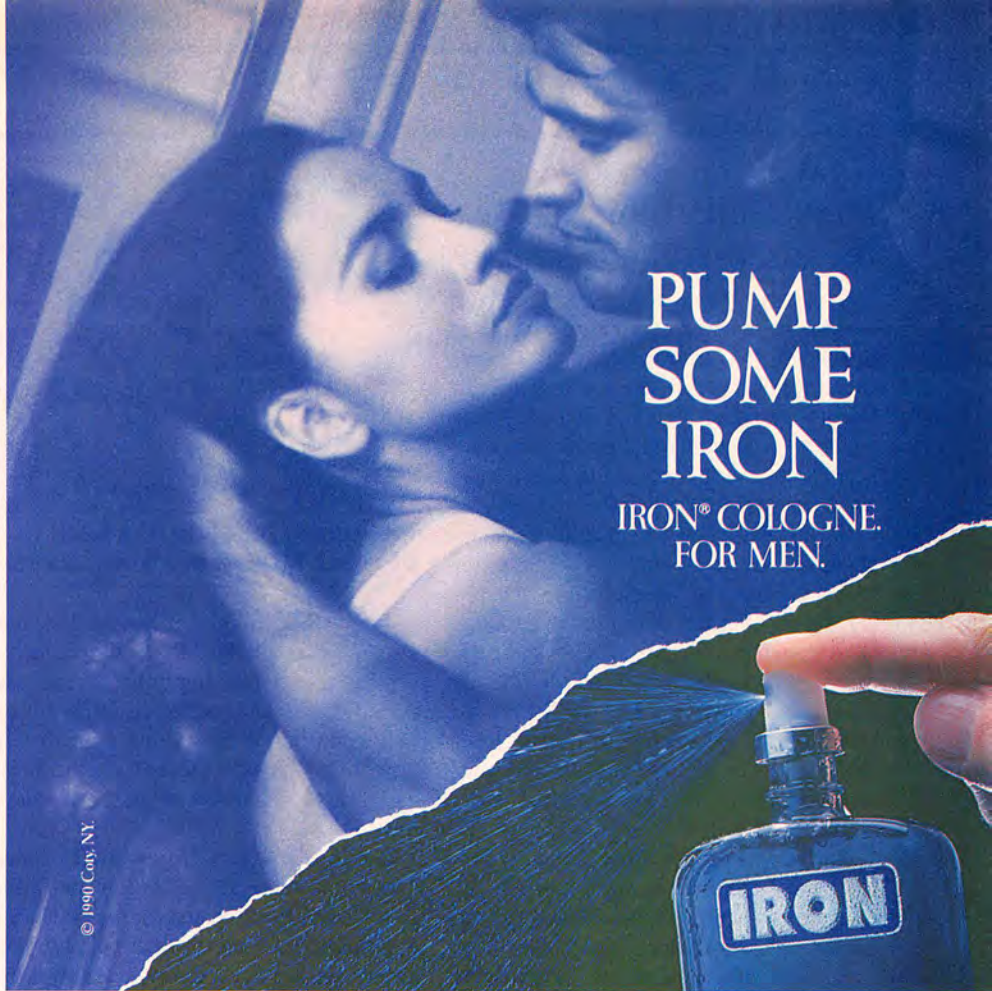
Any league that's named 'Ivy' is bound to be a bit different.

dime defenses. When ESPN demanded that the Ivy Leaguers change their starting times or risk losing their Game of the Week contract, they politely told the cable network to take its cameras and . . . move them to another conference.

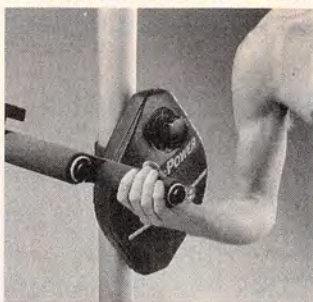
3. **Plenty of good seats are still available.** With the most notable exception of The Game between Harvard and Yale, fans can walk up to the ticket window on any given Saturday afternoon and purchase a seat that isn't in the next county.

4. **The bands.** Even if the game is a bust, the trademark antics of the bands are guaranteed to be well worth the price of admission.

5. **The Big Three championship.** There is no more spirited competition in all of college football than the annual helmet-knocking between Harvard, Princeton, and Yale. What grand prize goes to the victor? Lead coverage on ESPN's "SportsCenter"? Much-needed pub to attract NFL scouts? A check from a wealthy alumnus slid under its door? No, the survivor gets to build a large bonfire on campus, dissect its opponents' strategy, and discuss the hazards of nuclear waste. —PL.



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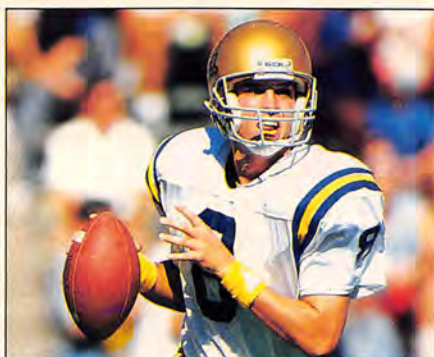
## Next they'll say Pecos Bill invented the three-step dropback

Back when Texas football had as much finesse as a tractor pull, the state was renowned for producing great running backs. Earl Campbell, Eric Dickerson, Billy Simms, Thurman Thomas, and Joe Washington all grew up in a state where the unofficial motto was, "Three things can happen when you pass, and two of them are bad."

In the last five years, though, Texas has become even more famous for its quarterbacks. There are so many good passers coming out of the state right now that Rice's Donald Hollas, a native of Rosenberg who was the fifth quarterback selected in the 1991 NFL draft, was lost in the crowd. Imagine this: The state of Texas has a chance to produce a Heisman Trophy quarterback for four consecutive years.

The trend is already under way:

**Andre Ware, Houston** (Heisman Trophy winner, 1989). He grew up in the southeast Texas town of Dickinson and ran the veer in high school, but as a passer he threw for more yards and tossed more touchdowns than any Heisman winner in history.



**Maddox is just one of a herd  
of great TD tossers from Texas.**

**Ty Detmer, Brigham Young** (Heisman Trophy winner, 1990). Detmer grew up in south central and southwest Texas and played high school ball for his father in San Antonio. Despite his relatively small size (6-foot, 160 pounds) Detmer set the Texas high school single-season passing yardage record as a junior.

**David Klingler, Houston** (Heisman Trophy candidate, 1991). Klingler was raised in suburban Houston and ran the wishbone offense at the same high school that produced running back Craig James 10 years earlier. Unlike Detmer, Klingler was re-

nowned for his athleticism: He high-jumped seven feet and long-jumped 24 feet and received major college basketball offers.

**Tommy Maddox, UCLA** (Heisman Trophy candidate, 1992 and 1993). Like Klingler, Maddox grew up in the big-city suburbs (he played high school football at Hurst Bell, outside Dallas). After taking over as a redshirt freshman last year, Maddox set a new UCLA single-game passing record and recorded the third best passing season in Bruins history.

Consider these other prolific Texas passers:

**Alex Van Pelt, Pittsburgh.** Not considered a blue-chip talent at San Antonio's Churchill High School, Van Pelt came out of nowhere to win Pitt's starting quarterback job as a freshman. He already has passed for 5,308 yards and 31 touchdowns in his first two seasons.

**Reggie Perry, Southern Cal.** Perry grew up in the northeast Texas town of Denison and was considered a more valuable recruit out of high school than Maddox. According to USC coach Larry Smith, Perry has a better arm than the man he replaces as the Trojans' starting quarterback, Todd Marinovich.—BRAD BUCHHOLZ ■



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## They know we're going to run here, so let's fool 'em and run it

Four reasons why Michigan doesn't miss Bo Schembechler . . . or what Gary Moeller knows that Bo doesn't:

**1. Mo knows unpredictability.** In the fourth quarter of Moeller's debut at Notre Dame, the Wolverines drove 71 yards on the ground in seven plays. Faced with a first-and-10 on the Irish 11, Moeller allowed quarterback Elvis Grbac to throw what should have been a high-percentage pass into the endzone.

The Wolverines pass on first down? On the 11-yard line? On the road? As if Bo and Woody had willed the outcome, the aerial was intercepted, the Irish hung on for a 28-24 victory, and Moeller had some explaining to do. OK, so an old-fashioned running play behind the Wolverines' 500-pound tackles may have been a wiser choice than that uncharacteristic bit of derring-do, but don't have a cow, man. Hey, not even Moeller allowed Rocket Ismail the opportunity to run back a pair of kickoffs for touchdowns in the same game.

**2. Mo knows how to admit a mistake (gasp).** Earlier against Notre Dame, the Wolverines led 24-14 when they faced



Bo and a throw just didn't mix.

fourth-and-inches on the Irish 19. Rather than trying for a touchdown, Moeller opted for a field goal attempt. "I just wanted to make sure we got some points," he said.

As it turned out, it was not a good decision—the kick missed—and afterward Moeller made an astonishing admission for a Wolverines head coach. "I may have made a mistake," he said.

**3. Mo knows change.** Michigan's de-

fense was as point-resistant as ever last season—it yielded 18 or fewer in each of the last six games—which hardly qualifies as a news flash. The difference was that the defensive scheme showed a diversity that hadn't been seen around Ann Arbor for years.

After the Wolverines limited Wisconsin to 18 yards rushing in a 41-3 blowout, Badgers coach Barry Alvarez was moved to say, "They're doing more things than they did in the past. They still run and close on the ball as well as ever, but now they use more man-to-man coverage."

**4. Mo knows (louder gasp) sportsmanship.** Lost in the carousel of revolving No. 1 teams last season was a blown call that may have cancelled Michigan's stay in the penthouse. Following a touchdown with six seconds left against Michigan State, Desmond Howard dropped the two-point conversion pass attempt, but only after he had been tripped by the Spartans defender before the pass arrived. The hometown call never came, and the 28-27 setback took the Wolverines out of national championship contention.

So what was a coach to do? Cuss a maize-and-blue streak at the officials? Demand a Big Ten investigation? Bo? Yes. Mo? "If I knew the officials were going to do something like that to us," he said, "I would have gone for one point."—PL.



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## Hey, forget the game, man—dig this crazy scenery

*The four best college towns to be in if you don't have a ticket:*

**Austin, Texas.** The best city in Texas, hands down. With the resurgence of University of Texas football, getting a ticket for Memorial Stadium is tougher than ever—but no problem. Just start out the evening at Schultz's Beer Garden and soak up the mood of the Saturday night crowd (most UT home games, especially early in the year, are on Saturday night). After that, travel down to Sixth Street and just watch the crowds. If you must, bring a portable radio so you can find out how the Horns are doing.

**Tuscaloosa, Ala.** Strange pick, you say? Well, sure, if you want normal entertainment, but if you happen to be in Tuscaloosa on a football weekend and don't have a ticket, spend the pregame time checking out the crowd. It's a virtual fashion show of Southern belles and gentlemen. Then head a few minutes outside of town to a place called Dreamland, where the best ribs in the South are served. The place doesn't have ambience—it's just a shack in a wooded area—but you can eat like a king, and since



Two things allowed in Austin: steers and beers.

the Tide are playing it probably won't be as crowded during the game.

**Boulder, Colo.** If you like scenery, especially mountains, the menu around the Colorado campus offers a wide variety. If you make the trip in early fall the weather could be spectacular. Browse among the shops, bookstores, and restaurants in the downtown mall, and three hours will go by faster

than you can imagine. If the Buffs win, as they have done regularly for the last few years, the postgame party will find you.

**Berkeley, Calif.** Berkeley is, well, different, as if a time warp from the '60s grabbed the city and sent it back 30 years. You still can find Volkswagen buses with peace slogans painted on the sides, and it has more book stores per city block than just about any college town in the country. Since Cal games rarely sell out

you might want to take in the Bears, but on a clear day you can climb to the top of Memorial Stadium and check out the San Francisco skyline. With that in mind, you might just want to forget the game and head into The City. You can always pick up the paper the next day to find out what happened while you're having a Sunday brunch at the Claremont Hotel.—M.B.

## If only we can get him to hand off to himself and catch his own passes

Before the recent rise of spread formations and multiple sets in college football, the prototype running back was just that: a one-dimensional guy whose primary responsibility was to carry the ball on the ground. In today's game, though, the classic power back has gone the way of Styrofoam, the eight-track tape, and the McRib. Reflecting the changes in offensive strategy, the modern running back has evolved into an all-purpose player. In multiple sets, coaches are placing the highest value on backs they can send in motion out of the backfield or shift into a variety of slot positions. Here's a look at five top all-purpose threats in 1991:

**Glyn Milburn, Stanford.** Forget Raghib Ismail—this darting, daring All-Pac-10 halfback led the nation last season in all-purpose production (2,222 yards) as a sophomore and bested Ismail in virtually every major statistical category, including kickoff and punt returns. Only 5'9" and 170 pounds, Milburn averaged 4.8 yards per carry (729 rushing yards in all) as a rusher and caught more passes (64, for 632 yards) than any running back in the country. In Stanford's season finale against California, Milburn set an NCAA single-game record with 379 all-purpose yards (196 rushing, 66 receiving,



Milburn just might be another Rocket getting set to explode.

123 on kickoffs, and minus-6 on punt returns).

**Natrone Means, North Carolina.** He was a natural freshman in 1990 and didn't break into the starting lineup until the sixth game of the season, but by the end of the year Means had emerged as the best all-purpose back in the ACC. Playing tailback in the North Carolina I-formation, Means led the team with 849 yards rushing and finished second in receiving with 24 catches for 229 yards. A tough off-tackle runner who's

shaped like a fullback (5'10", 227 pounds), Means also had the speed to score on a 72-yard reception and a 76-yard run.

**Trevor Cobb, Rice.** Playing in a single-back spread formation, Cobb finished eighth in the nation with 1,325 rushing yards. At 5'9" and 180 pounds, Cobb's rugged nature had a lot to do with providing much-needed balance to the Owls attack. He also caught 36 passes for 312 yards last year.

**Robert Smith, Ohio State.** As a freshman last season Smith averaged 6.4 yards per carry and finished third in the Big Ten with 1,126 all-purpose yards. There's no question about his athleticism: He blocked a field goal in Ohio State's spring game and will handle both kickoff and punt returns this season. Although Smith caught only 10 passes last year, Ohio State coaches think so highly of his pass receiving potential that they may not start him at tailback this year, preferring to place him on the wing and let Carlos Snow play tailback.

**Lorenzo Neal, Fresno State.** Although he spent much of last season blocking for Fresno State's multitasking tailback, Aaron Craver (a third-round NFL draft choice), the 6'0", 220-pound Neal was terrific when he got the chance to tote the ball himself. As a runner Neal rushed for 580 yards, scored nine touchdowns, and averaged 5.4 yards per carry; as a receiver he caught 15 passes for 214 yards.—B.B.



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## There was a time when titans walked the earth . . .



**Allen went out a winner after his remarkable year at Long Beach.**

George Allen told me last year he would have beaten Tom Landry in a fistfight. It's the same thing he used to tell his Redskins' "Over The Hill Gang" in pep talks before they played Dallas: Fight 'em right on the 50-yard line. Twenty years hadn't changed his mind.

"But Landry's bigger than you, George," I said, "and he keeps himself in great shape, too." Then I added, "And Tom Landry was once a bomber pilot in the war."

"He doesn't have any bombs out there in the middle of the field," said Allen. He reminded me that his teams were 10-8 against Landry's. His eyes grew tight. "I think it would have ended up in a wrestling match." And then: "I want it more badly than he does."

George Allen was that rare late-20th century man: He never was swayed by scrutiny or by celebrity. Even as controversy tracked him like a posse, he remained faithful to who he was throughout his remarkable rise and his equally remarkable fall in the National Football League. Allen died last New Year's Eve at age 72, and he did so without claiming three things he wanted dearly: (1) induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame; (2) a return to the NFL, perhaps as an owner with a very controlling interest; and (3) publication of his autobiography.

I spent the final 10 months of Allen's life working with him on his life story. The man was colorful, intense, and quirky beyond imagination. We spent days together, talking in his kitchen, on the telephone, in the back of his car (he always had a driver), and in his office at Long Beach State, where he closed his six-decade coaching career with a near-miraculous 6-5 season in 1990.

Once, my phone rang. It was George, calling from somewhere on the L.A. freeways. "Did I tell you about the time my telephone was bugged at our house in Great Falls, Va.?" He said it happened in 1977, just before he left the Redskins for Carroll Rosenbloom's Rams. First he suspected the Cowboys, then he decided the guilty man must have been Redskins owner Edward Bennett Williams. (Williams, George said, later denied it.) Within a week Allen had sent me a copy of a report done by a field man from the CIA, including a sketch of suspicious Telephone Pole No. 73.

Allen possessed the third-highest winning percentage among head coaches in NFL history (only Vince Lombardi and John Madden rated higher). He never suffered a losing record in 14 NFL seasons. He defined special teams and the nickel defense, hired 14 assistants who later became NFL head coaches, and drafted Gayle Sayers, Mike Ditka, and Dick Butkus for George Halas' Chicago Bears. His impact on the game was, indisputably, massive.

George Allen coaching at Long Beach State was an absurd match, like Arthur Fiedler conducting a fraternity band. "Look at that No. 35," said Etty Allen, the coach's effervescent wife, as Long Beach players emerged from the tunnel before one game. "I'm bigger than he is."

Allen's detractors were legion. He once was described as "Richard Nixon with a whistle" during his days with the Redskins, from 1971 to '77. In fact, the two men enjoyed a certain kinship; the former president occasionally corresponded with Allen during the coach's final years. "Nixon was a great statesman with a superior intellect," Allen said. Like Nixon, Allen was a win-at-

all-costs workaholic who cloaked himself in secrecy and demanded loyalty from his men. He had a dramatic rise, suffered a terrible fall, and then enjoyed a small reinvention late in life. Allen didn't want this comparison taken too far, though: "I didn't do anything illegal," he said.

Allen was frozen out of the NFL for his last 12 years. He found other diversions: He coached in the United States Football League and was appointed by President Ronald Reagan to chair the nation's physical fitness council.

Once he even cajoled a grudging President Reagan into placing a Chicago Blitz helmet on his head during a White House function attended by sports celebrities. The helmet was too small, however, and Reagan struggled to remove it. Allen recalled the president's face reddening and Nancy Reagan standing nearby, percolating with irritation. The president finally got the thing off his head, mussing his hair. Allen said he later saw President Reagan in a White House men's room, throwing cold water on his face.

Yet this was the greatness of George Allen: He could convince a U.S. president to wear a Chicago Blitz helmet, and he could convince a team of college players prone to defeat that victory was possible, even probable.

George Allen, the most colorful and controversial coach in pro football history, was a man defined by the swiftness and the severity of the NFL's slicing double-edged sword. Yet, on a personal level, he seemed simple and, at times, almost goofy. He left love notes for his wife all about their house. Etty Allen still has his last one: "Etty, Sweetheart. I love you more than Ever. I'll be Home Early."

Allen never made it back to the NFL, a cold injustice. He has not yet been inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame, another cold injustice. As for the book on his life, it thus far remains without a contract with a publishing house.

A scene remains frozen in my mind: I sat with Allen in his living room in Southern California, watching a tape of the coach dancing in the Redskins locker room after a victory. His Over The Hill Gang—veterans who had had their childlike love of the game restored to them by their calculating coach—danced about him.

I was about to laugh at this wonderful picture, but when I looked at Allen he was sitting there tugging on his lip as he always did on the sideline. His look was painfully serious. To George Allen, the game never ended.—GARY POMERANTZ



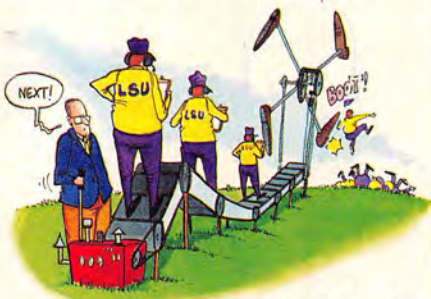
## I was wondering if you have any seating available in the nonsmoking section

*Coaches on the hot seat:*

**Jack Crowe, Arkansas.** As if a 3-8 record—the most defeats for a Razorbacks team since 1952—wasn't bad enough, a switch to the Southeastern Conference next season is sure to make the folks around Fayetteville squirm in their seats even more. Even if Crowe treads water this season (and the lack of a proven quarterback and a shortage of numbers at virtually every position make that very unlikely), an even more pressing challenge will be the recruiting vultures already hovering over Arkansas and Texas, longtime Razorbacks strongholds.

**Joe Krivak, Maryland.** The Terrapins' best record (6-5) since 1985 notwithstanding, only a stunning upset of Virginia gave Krivak a reprieve late last season. Unless he finds a way to put some fannies in the seats—Maryland ranked a distant 59th in home attendance a year ago when it attracted fewer than 32,000 patrons per game—in the suddenly competitive Atlantic Coast Conference, a six-month lease looks a tad safer than a 30-year mortgage.

**Curley Hallman, LSU.** Hallman could very well be the answer at LSU, as his success at Southern Mississippi suggests, but recent history makes you wonder if the powers that be down on the Bayou even



'Those guys? They're in line to be head football coach.'

know the question. The Tigers' roll call of field bosses since '79 sounds like the Cal lateral-kickoff return: McClendon to Rein to Stovall to Arnsperger to Archer to Hallman.

**Paul Pasqualoni, Syracuse.** As a former Orangemen defensive assistant, Pasqualoni comes already plugged in to the system, but expectations are high, and rightfully so. Not only did Dick MacPherson guide Syracuse to bowl victories the last three seasons and an 11-0-1 mark in 1987, but he also left behind talent that some believe has national championship potential. In other words, Syracuse's excuses look to be in short supply.—P.L.

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# NUMBERS

## THE SURE THING

The passing game in the NFL used to be a low-percentage, all-or-nothing proposition. However, from 1935 until 1980, NFL completion percentages rose steadily while yards per completion dwindled, as offenses gradually shifted toward controlling the ball and minimizing mistakes. During the last decade, though, both statistics have stabilized. Listed below are the league's pass completion percentage and yards per completion, charted in five-year intervals.

| Season | Pct.  | Yds./Comp. |
|--------|-------|------------|
| 1935   | .34.3 | 15.39      |
| 1940   | .42.9 | 14.27      |
| 1945   | .45.4 | 15.00      |
| 1950   | .46.6 | 14.46      |
| 1955   | .47.9 | 13.82      |
| 1960   | .52.1 | 14.40      |
| 1965   | .51.3 | 14.54      |
| 1970   | .51.1 | 13.17      |
| 1975   | .52.5 | 12.72      |
| 1980   | .56.2 | 12.46      |
| 1985   | .54.8 | 12.85      |
| 1990   | .56.0 | 12.51      |

By Greg Thomas

## CARDIAC KIDS

One mark of a winning club is the ability to pull out the close ones, and last season's competition in the National Football League backs that up. Of the top five teams in each conference in games decided by five points or fewer, only one team in each conference didn't make it to the playoffs. Here are the records and winning percentages in last year's games decided by five points or fewer for each NFL team.

| AFC                  |     |      |
|----------------------|-----|------|
| Team                 | W-L | Pct. |
| Cincinnati Bengals   | 5-1 | .833 |
| Los Angeles Raiders  | 6-2 | .750 |
| Buffalo Bills        | 3-1 | .750 |
| Miami Dolphins       | 3-1 | .750 |
| Indianapolis Colts   | 4-2 | .667 |
| Kansas City Chiefs   | 4-3 | .571 |
| Seattle Seahawks     | 4-3 | .571 |
| Pittsburgh Steelers  | 1-1 | .500 |
| New York Jets        | 3-4 | .429 |
| Cleveland Browns     | 2-3 | .400 |
| New England Patriots | 1-2 | .333 |
| Denver Broncos       | 2-7 | .222 |
| Houston Oilers       | 1-4 | .200 |
| San Diego Chargers   | 0-5 | .000 |

| NFC                  |     |      |
|----------------------|-----|------|
| Team                 | W-L | Pct. |
| San Francisco 49ers  | 7-1 | .875 |
| Dallas Cowboys       | 5-2 | .714 |
| New York Giants      | 4-2 | .667 |
| Washington Redskins  | 2-1 | .667 |
| Chicago Bears        | 2-1 | .667 |
| Green Bay Packers    | 2-1 | .667 |
| New Orleans Saints   | 5-4 | .556 |
| Philadelphia Eagles  | 3-3 | .500 |
| Tampa Bay Buccaneers | 2-3 | .400 |
| Phoenix Cardinals    | 2-4 | .333 |
| Minnesota Vikings    | 2-5 | .286 |
| Atlanta Falcons      | 1-4 | .200 |
| Los Angeles Rams     | 1-4 | .200 |
| Detroit Lions        | 0-3 | .000 |

By John Grabowski

## BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

Some NFL teams have a knack for getting out of the gate in a hurry, and some have earned a reputation for finishing strongly. (And some, such as the San Francisco 49ers, do both.) For example, the Bills have begun to dominate the early part of their schedule in the last few years but, until last season, continued to stumble late. Listed below are team records for the first four games of the last five seasons, along with their December records in each of those years.

Here are the NFL's fast starters . . .

| AFC                  | 1986 | 1987  | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | Total  | Pct. |
|----------------------|------|-------|------|------|------|--------|------|
| Cincinnati Bengals   | 2-2  | 2-2   | 4-0  | 3-1  | 3-1  | 14-6   | .700 |
| Denver Broncos       | 4-0  | 2-1-1 | 1-3  | 3-1  | 2-2  | 12-7-1 | .625 |
| Buffalo Bills        | 1-3  | 1-3   | 4-0  | 3-1  | 3-1  | 12-8   | .600 |
| Houston Oilers       | 1-3  | 3-1   | 3-1  | 2-2  | 2-2  | 11-9   | .550 |
| Los Angeles Raiders  | 1-3  | 3-1   | 2-2  | 1-3  | 4-0  | 11-9   | .550 |
| New York Jets        | 3-1  | 2-2   | 3-1  | 1-3  | 2-2  | 11-9   | .550 |
| Cleveland Browns     | 2-2  | 2-2   | 2-2  | 3-1  | 1-3  | 10-10  | .500 |
| Seattle Seahawks     | 3-1  | 2-2   | 2-2  | 2-2  | 1-3  | 10-10  | .500 |
| Kansas City Chiefs   | 3-1  | 1-3   | 1-3  | 1-3  | 3-1  | 9-11   | .450 |
| San Diego Chargers   | 1-3  | 3-1   | 2-2  | 2-2  | 1-3  | 9-11   | .450 |
| Miami Dolphins       | 1-3  | 2-2   | 1-3  | 1-3  | 3-1  | 8-12   | .400 |
| New England Patriots | 2-2  | 2-2   | 1-3  | 1-3  | 1-3  | 7-13   | .350 |
| Pittsburgh Steelers  | 1-3  | 2-2   | 1-3  | 2-2  | 1-3  | 7-13   | .350 |
| Indianapolis Colts   | 0-4  | 2-2   | 1-3  | 2-2  | 1-3  | 6-14   | .300 |

| NFC                  | 1986 | 1987  | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | Total  | Pct. |
|----------------------|------|-------|------|------|------|--------|------|
| Chicago Bears        | 4-0  | 4-0   | 3-1  | 4-0  | 3-1  | 18-2   | .900 |
| San Francisco 49ers  | 3-1  | 3-1   | 3-1  | 3-1  | 4-0  | 16-4   | .800 |
| Washington Redskins  | 4-0  | 3-1   | 2-2  | 2-2  | 3-1  | 14-6   | .700 |
| Los Angeles Rams     | 3-1  | 1-3   | 4-0  | 4-0  | 1-3  | 13-7   | .650 |
| New York Giants      | 3-1  | 0-4   | 2-2  | 4-0  | 4-0  | 13-7   | .650 |
| Minnesota Vikings    | 2-2  | 2-2   | 3-1  | 2-2  | 1-3  | 10-10  | .500 |
| Atlanta Falcons      | 4-0  | 1-3   | 1-3  | 1-3  | 2-2  | 9-11   | .450 |
| Dallas Cowboys       | 3-1  | 3-1   | 2-2  | 0-4  | 1-3  | 9-11   | .450 |
| Tampa Bay Buccaneers | 1-3  | 2-2   | 1-3  | 2-2  | 3-1  | 9-11   | .450 |
| New Orleans Saints   | 1-3  | 2-2   | 3-1  | 1-3  | 1-3  | 8-12   | .400 |
| Phoenix Cardinals    | 0-4  | 2-2   | 2-2  | 2-2  | 1-3  | 7-13   | .350 |
| Philadelphia Eagles  | 1-3  | 1-3   | 1-3  | 2-2  | 1-3  | 6-14   | .300 |
| Green Bay Packers    | 0-4  | 1-2-1 | 0-4  | 2-2  | 2-2  | 5-14-1 | .275 |
| Detroit Lions        | 1-3  | 1-3   | 1-3  | 0-4  | 1-3  | 4-16   | .200 |

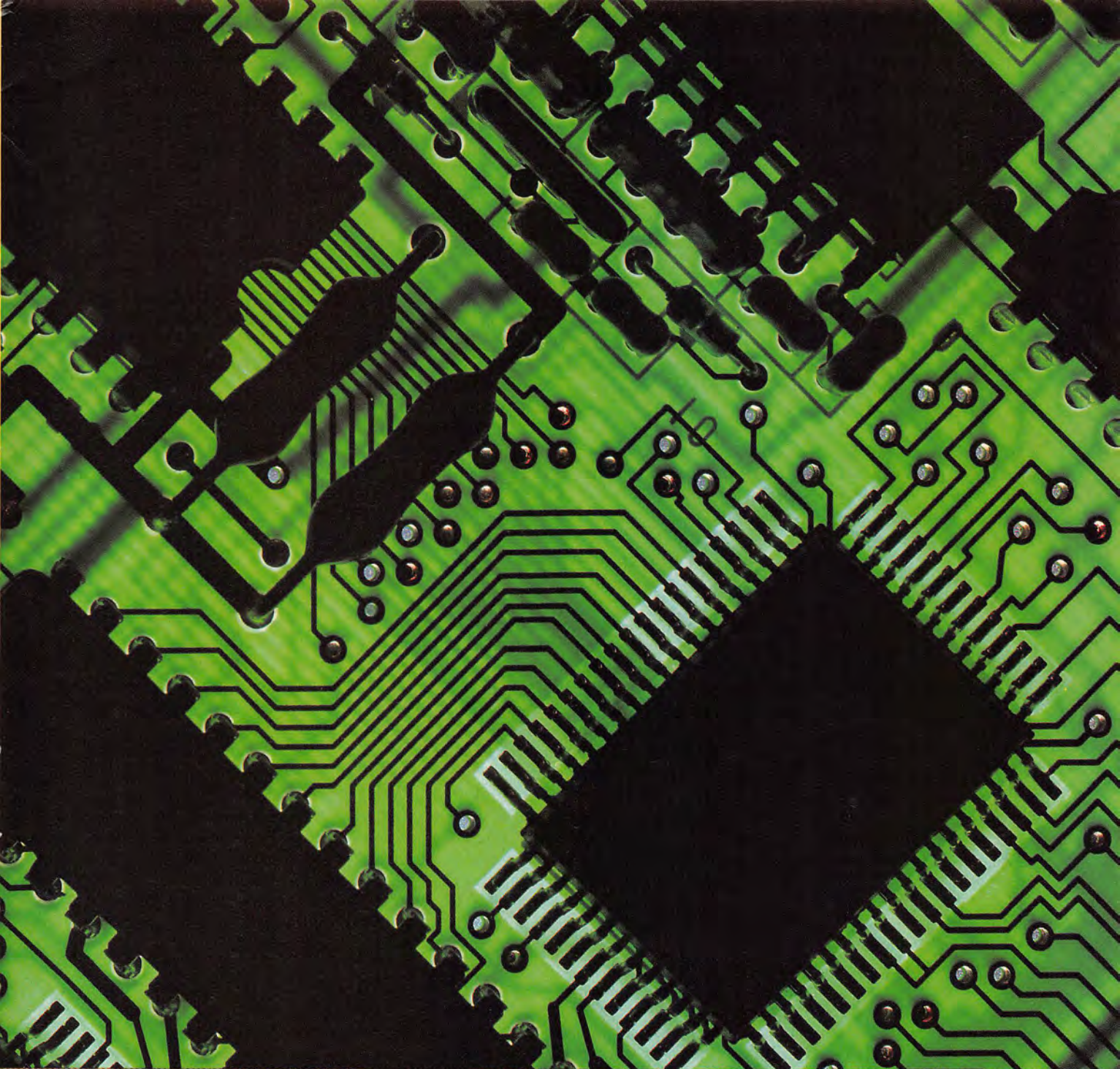
. . . and here are the killers down the stretch:

| AFC                  | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | Total | Pct. |
|----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|
| Seattle Seahawks     | 3-0  | 2-2  | 2-1  | 3-1  | 4-1  | 14-5  | .737 |
| Kansas City Chiefs   | 3-0  | 2-2  | 1-2  | 3-1  | 4-1  | 13-6  | .684 |
| Indianapolis Colts   | 3-0  | 3-1  | 2-1  | 2-2  | 2-3  | 12-7  | .632 |
| Pittsburgh Steelers  | 2-1  | 2-2  | 2-1  | 3-1  | 3-2  | 12-7  | .632 |
| Cleveland Browns     | 3-0  | 3-1  | 2-1  | 2-2  | 1-4  | 11-8  | .579 |
| Houston Oilers       | 2-1  | 3-1  | 1-2  | 2-2  | 3-2  | 11-8  | .579 |
| Cincinnati Bengals   | 2-1  | 1-3  | 2-1  | 2-2  | 3-2  | 10-9  | .526 |
| Miami Dolphins       | 2-1  | 3-1  | 1-2  | 1-3  | 3-2  | 10-9  | .526 |
| Los Angeles Raiders  | 0-3  | 1-3  | 1-2  | 2-2  | 5-0  | 9-10  | .474 |
| Denver Broncos       | 1-2  | 3-1  | 1-2  | 1-3  | 2-3  | 8-11  | .421 |
| Buffalo Bills        | 0-3  | 1-3  | 1-2  | 1-3  | 4-1  | 7-12  | .368 |
| New England Patriots | 1-2  | 3-1  | 2-1  | 1-3  | 0-5  | 7-12  | .368 |
| San Diego Chargers   | 1-2  | 0-4  | 2-1  | 2-2  | 1-3  | 6-12  | .333 |
| New York Jets        | 0-3  | 0-4  | 2-1  | 1-3  | 2-2  | 5-13  | .278 |

| NFC                  | 1986  | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | Total  | Pct. |
|----------------------|-------|------|------|------|------|--------|------|
| San Francisco 49ers  | 3-1   | 4-0  | 2-1  | 4-0  | 4-1  | 17-3   | .850 |
| New York Giants      | 4-0   | 3-1  | 2-1  | 3-1  | 3-2  | 15-5   | .750 |
| Washington Redskins  | 1-2   | 3-1  | 1-2  | 4-0  | 4-1  | 13-6   | .684 |
| New Orleans Saints   | 1-2   | 4-0  | 1-2  | 3-1  | 3-2  | 12-7   | .632 |
| Philadelphia Eagles  | 1-1-1 | 2-2  | 2-1  | 2-2  | 3-2  | 10-8-1 | .553 |
| Los Angeles Rams     | 1-2   | 2-2  | 3-0  | 3-1  | 1-4  | 10-9   | .526 |
| Detroit Lions        | 0-3   | 2-2  | 1-2  | 4-0  | 2-3  | 9-10   | .474 |
| Minnesota Vikings    | 2-1   | 1-3  | 2-1  | 3-1  | 1-4  | 9-10   | .474 |
| Chicago Bears        | 3-0   | 2-2  | 1-2  | 0-4  | 2-3  | 8-11   | .421 |
| Green Bay Packers    | 1-2   | 1-3  | 2-1  | 3-1  | 0-5  | 7-12   | .368 |
| Phoenix Cardinals    | 1-1-1 | 2-2  | 0-3  | 0-4  | 2-3  | 5-13-1 | .289 |
| Dallas Cowboys       | 0-3   | 2-2  | 1-2  | 0-4  | 2-2  | 5-13   | .278 |
| Atlanta Falcons      | 2-1   | 1-3  | 0-3  | 0-4  | 2-3  | 5-14   | .263 |
| Tampa Bay Buccaneers | 0-3   | 0-4  | 2-1  | 0-4  | 2-2  | 4-14   | .222 |

By John Grabowski





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# THE GOOD DOCTOR

**I** know Michael Jordan looks like he'll be around forever, but when he passes on to that great arena in the sky, who will get all of his millions?

L.K., WASHINGTON, D.C.

Why, the heir Jordans, of course.

**W**hy in the world would Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Boomer Esiason want to spend his offseason working in the TV booth as a color man on World League of American Football games?

J.M., SAN FRANCISCO

Hey, it beats the alternative: attending coach Sam Wyche's Offseason Locker Room Charm School.

**W**hy was golfer Paul Azinger disqualified at the Doral Open? I understand a fan noticed he did something illegally and it was caught by the TV cameras. Is that correct?

H.H., AUGUSTA, GA.

Sadly, yes. But, you know, considering The Zinger's experience, you wouldn't have expected to see the old slip-the-ball-through-the-hole-in-the-pocket-down-the-pants-leg trick.

**M**oses Malone of the Atlanta Hawks has been playing in the NBA for 14 years and is still effective. Do you think he is headed for the Pro Basketball Hall of Fame?

M.F., DUNWOODY, GA.

I don't know about that, but he's already made the All-Time All-Sweat team. The fluids Malone has lost in perspiration over the years could irrigate the back nine at Pebble Beach.

**M**y neighbor and I have a bet going. I say Steffi Graf has had a nose job. My neighbor says she hasn't. Who's right?

C.E., FORT LAUDERDALE

Let's cross that bridge when we come to it.

**I**f you could hear any two guys tell old wrestling stories, who would it be: Hulk Hogan and Andre the Giant, or Dick the Bruiser and Verne Gagne?

W.W.F., KALISPELL, MONT.

Actually, the guys I'd like to hear compare wrestling stories are Tom Hayden and Ted Turner.

**W**hy would the NFL hire this guy Neil Austrian as its president? First, we get Paul Tagliabue, a former antitrust lawyer, as commissioner. Now we've got an investment banker as his second-in-command. What's next?

J.F., NEW ORLEANS

Sorry you asked. I understand one of the new expansion teams will be called the Dow Jones Industrials.

**W**hy does Alabama basketball coach Wimp Sanderson insist on wearing those God-awful plaid sport coats?

H.D., ATHENS, GA.

Ever since he bought into that Lindsay Nelson factory outlet, he's been asking himself the same thing.

**I** heard that CBS sportscaster Pat O'Brien and NBA Commissioner David Stern kissed each other at a Hawks-Lakers game last season. Is that true?

H.B., NEW YORK

Yes, it is, and you wouldn't believe the fallout. Isaiah and Magic claim they had exclusive rights to all NBA-sanctioned kisses. Plus, on top of that, NBC and TNT, who do the NBA games, are upset that Stern only gives their guys a handshake.

**I** read an article recently in which Tom Weiskopf was ripping Jack Nicklaus for poor golf course design and was very critical of Fred Couples for lacking a proper winning attitude. What got Weiskopf so peeved?

L.T., DALLAS

A double-bogey he took in 1974.

**I** couldn't believe it when Len Dykstra admitted that he had written checks for losses of \$78,000 from playing poker and golf. How did that happen?

J.S., CHARLOTTE, N.C.

He made a serious mistake. The night before the game, he consulted that well-known poker face, Dale Murphy.

**H**ow will history record the failed comeback try of Baltimore Orioles pitcher Jim Palmer?

J.K., ST. LOUIS

From what we could see, just a brief appearance.

**I** was watching the Philadelphia 76ers play the other day, and I couldn't help but notice how bizarre 7'7" Manute Bol looks on the court. Where did he come from?

S.W., ATLANTA

Dick Vitale's basement laboratory.

**W**hat will happen to the Los Angeles Raiders this year after that 51-3 embarrassment to the Buffalo Bills in the AFC Championship Game? Is Al Davis planning to shake things up?

M.S., DENVER

Not really, but there is that new slogan: "Just score a touchdown, baby."

**W**hen I heard Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf speak at all those press conferences during the Persian Gulf war, he reminded me of a football coach. To what do you attribute his easy victory?

H.M., GUNNERY, WYO.

Well, nobody knew it at the time—Peter Arnett even slept through this one—but the Patriot missiles were only hitting one out of every 16 Scud missiles fired and had to be replaced faster than you could say three kilometers and a cloud of sand. Had Stormin' Norman not gone to those 49ers missiles early on, Saddam Hussein might still have a shot at the playoffs.

**I**n your opinion, which two professional athletes should marry because they're made for each other?

C.K., GILBERT, ARIZ.

Chi Chi Rodriguez and Cha Cha Muldowney.

**W**hy did they need a new Comiskey Park in Chicago right across the street from the old one?

G.S., TAMPA

After all those years, the buildup of chewing gum under the seats had eaten through the stadium structure. Besides, Minnie Minoso wants to be the first player to play in six different decades in five different home stadiums. ■

*In a fever to know what really goes on in the world of sports? Will you feel awful until you find out? Send for a diagnosis to: The Good Doctor, 990 Grove Street, Evanston, Illinois 60201—then wait patiently.*





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# THE FAN

By JOAN VAN ARK

## I Want To Be Left Alone . . . To Run

I TOOK UP RUNNING 20 years ago in Germany. I had been doing a play in London, and my husband, John Marshall, and I moved to Germany, where he was stationed at Spang Dahlem Air Base. We were just newlyweds, and I had all this nervous energy, all this excess energy building up inside me. I was not working for the first time in I don't know how long, and I would go to the football field on the base and just do laps by myself. It was right then and there that I realized I am, at heart, a runner. I have a runner's personality, a runner's psyche.

Either you are or you aren't a runner. A runner's psyche may sound esoteric, but it's simple: Runners are people who like solitude, but they are not people who want to be alone. They simply enjoy the solitude of running.

From the very beginning I was running off the crazy excess energy that I would throw into a role or a job. It's this "negative energy" that always blocks your thinking and gets in the way of achieving things. Running is the greatest prioritizer: I can begin my run with a hundred things on my list for that day, and when I'm finished I know just what I have to do. Usually it's only two or three main things.

Right now, I'm doing six miles a day. Some days I do less. Oddly enough, I live in a cul de sac, like the one on "Knots Landing," and I run from one end to the other, 10 laps. There are days when I can't run, though—work days, meeting days, "suit" days, location days. Sometimes it's just impossible to run. I'm in makeup at 6 a.m., which means I have to be up at 4:30. These are killer days. I work until 6 p.m., or later. One recent Friday, I got up at 3:30 in the morning and



*Running is a lot like acting—you're only as good as your last performance—but the difference is a mile is a mile. I can control that. A four-minute pace is an absolute.*

worked until 9 at night. That's a long day—and a day when running loses.

But I make up for it; I have to make up for it. On those days that I don't run I don't feel as centered. I feel tight, and I don't just mean my muscles. I don't feel as controlled or prioritized. Running puts everything in the right place mentally and physically.

A lot of people ask me how I keep so thin. It's not just from running. It's from nerves, too. When I am anxious I lose the most weight. I tend to burn off curves.

My diet is pretty funny. Nobody should go by my eating habits. *People* magazine had a cover story on Oprah, and she said, "My favorite food in the world is potatoes with horseradish." I thought, that really sounds great. Now, my favorite food now is mashed potatoes with horseradish. I have my housekeeper boil four or five potatoes, mash them and mix them up with olive oil, which has no cholesterol, and then she adds horseradish. Thank you, Oprah, for the idea. I usually have a caesar salad for dinner. During the day I drink orange juice; if I get really funny around 4 p.m., I have crackers and peanut butter. (If I have a piece of fruit on an empty

stomach, the company has to shut down.)

Sports is nothing new to me. Even as a kid I played basketball. I skied, because I grew up in Boulder, Colo. I rode horseback a lot. I grew up in a wonderful, wholesome environment overlooking 150 miles of the Rocky Mountains. We each had our own horse, and I would come home from school, throw a blanket over my horse, and go bareback riding for a couple of hours. It was so peaceful. I think my running provides that same kind of solitude, the same as being in Colorado on horseback—it seems that no matter where I am I can capture that kind of quality "alone time" through my running. Riding was a preamble to my running, the basis of my need for time out, time away from the phones. It gives me a sense of otherness, spirituality, and freedom.

It's important for women today, especially busy women and working mothers, to make time for themselves. It's a mistake if you don't.

It makes everything better: your work, your motherhood, your marriage. If you don't give yourself some solitude you cannot function as fully and as happily as you are capable of. Women are asked to do an awful lot these days—and, not so surprisingly, they can and do deliver—but they need a sport or some activity to provide them with a sense of separateness.

Running is a lot like acting—you're only as good as your last performance—but the difference is a mile is a mile. I can control that. A four-minute pace is still that: an absolute, an unvarying constant. This I can control. Acting, like life itself, is full of variables. Running just helps you deal with them a little better. ■

*When you're casting a long-running soap opera, who better to get than a runner?* JOAN VAN ARK has starred for years on the hit CBS nighttime soap, "Knots Landing."





"I went to see the doctor today. He poked a little. Probed a little. And lectured a lot. Everything was okay

until he came to my ears. Turned out they needed cleaning. When the nurse finished, it was pretty amazing. I could hear every squeak from



her rubber soles. And every scratch of the pen as I wrote them out a check I knew I couldn't possibly cover. On the way home I flipped on my car stereo and cranked it up.

Unbelievable. It was like I was hearing it for the very first time. Those speakers are gone in the morning."



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